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# Kent on Sunday

www.kentnews.co.uk December 4, 2016

East edition No 741

CRIME

## Child sex abuse in football probe

**Cops confirm there are cases in the county**

RURAL

## Farms face Brexit closure threat

**Fears over inability to find seasonal workers**

EDUCATION

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## Is Brexit blinding us to threat on our doorstep?

AMID all the hullabaloo over Brexit and what the experts are predicting will be a further tightening of the public purse strings as a consequence, it is just possible the government's eye has been taken off the proverbial ball.

Or, at least, that's giving it the benefit of enormous doubt.

Because we are now facing a reality where huge funding cuts to services we once all took for granted are biting deeper than anyone ever imagined.

There is no denying that originally there probably was a little fat to cut from our local authorities and schools. Even, perhaps, the bureaucratic giant that is the NHS. But no more.

Now we have slashed away at the meat to leave only the skeleton of these once mighty institutions. And because it is in the nature of those who work within them, they simply work harder to do more. But there comes a point where goodwill and dedication will not suffice.

We have long covered the cuts our councils face. This week the focus is on schools and the outcome is extremely worrying. More so because it is our future generation which will define us. They are the ones who will grow up in a Britain outside the EU and with the need to be ever more resourceful. They are the ones who, if they want to see services we have previously enjoyed restored, will be having to pay taxes or charges to experience what we once had for free.

Whether the situation we are in is ideologically driven or mere austerity, well, the jury may still be out on that, but Brexit may be the very least of our concerns if those we need to be fighting fit to deliver Britain's future success, are struggling even to get a basic education.

Editor **Chris Britcher**


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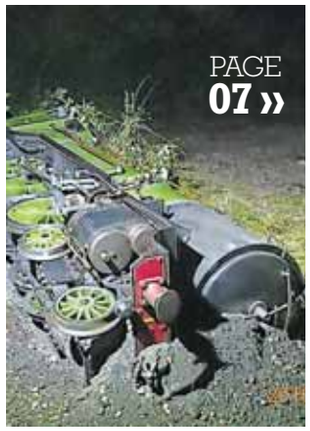
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# Cops here investigating child sex abuse in football

**By Emily King**
emily.king@archant.co.uk

**SCANDAL:** Kent is one of a number of areas where investigations are now taking place

POLICE have confirmed officers are investigating a number of child abuse allegations within Kent football.

The revelations come following an explosion of publicity after former professional football Andy Woodward, 43, waived his right to anonymity to expose his sexual abuse at the hands of a former coach at Crewe Alexandra.

Since then, dozens of other players have come forward to reveal they too were abused amid concerns it may be widespread in the game.

And on Friday, Kent Police confirmed it was one of a number of police forces around the country now following up on other allegations.

A spokesman confirmed to us: "Kent Police has received reports of non-recent child abuse within the football community in Kent, which it is currently reviewing.

"If there are victims in Kent that have not come forward we would encourage them to do so by calling the NSPCC helpline on 0800 023 2642, with the assurance that they will be treated sensitively and seriously."

Police said it would not be revealing the names of any of the clubs involved or confirming the number of allegations or the number of suspects involved.

The NSPCC helpline was set up on November 23 and received 860 calls within the first week alone – three times the number of referrals to the police and other agencies during the first few days of the Jimmy Savile scandal in 2012.

Allegations of abuse are then being passed from the children's protection charity to the relevant police forces.

The Kent FA refused to comment when KoS contacted it on Friday and referred all calls to the sport's governing body.

But in a recent letter from the Football Association's headquarters sent to all county affiliates, FA chairman Greg Clarke said: "Everyone at the FA is appalled by the horrific abuse that has been suffered by former footballers.

"We cannot and will not be complacent."

"We are working closely with the police and relevant authorities and we continue to encourage anyone with information about possible child abuse to report their concerns to the police, the FA or the NSPCC."

# Father's impassioned plea as drink-drive campaign is launched

THE annual drink-drive campaign was launched on Friday – highlighting once again the dangers of alcohol when behind the wheel.

Launched by Kent County Council, its mission is the reduce the 907 casualties which have occurred on the county's roads over the last three years as a result of drivers being under the influence.

Of the 907 casualties, 18 were fatal and 143 were serious, and 92 of the 228 perpetrators were aged 25 to 40.

A family who lost their only son have thrown their weight behind the message.

Pete Funnell lost his 19-year-old son Will when he was a passenger in a car which spun out of control on the way home. The driver was nearly three times over the legal limit.

He made a impassioned plea to motorists: "Please don't take the risk this Christmas."

Both his son and the driver were killed in the crash on the A229 near Linton Hill.

Mr Funnell added: "It was a split decision to get into the car that night, and it cost Will his life.

"Will always loved Christmas, it was his favourite time of year. Since his death, we can't bring ourselves to celebrate, there doesn't seem to be any point. Drink-driving has killed our Christmases, please don't let it destroy yours."

Kent County Council road safety team leader Vicky Watkins said: "Drivers must understand its not just those above the limit that are at risk as you don't have to be drunk to be dangerous. Just one drink can increase the chances of having a crash, sometimes with tragic consequences for the victims and their families.

"Drivers cannot be sure of the effect drink is having on their reaction times and ability to drive, until it is too late. Even small amounts of alcohol will affect your ability to drive safely. My message is simple; if you are driving just consider, is even one drink worth it?"

# Rail travellers get set to see another hike in ticket prices

SOUTHEASTERN train passengers can expect an average rise in unregulated fares of 1.8 per cent next year, it was confirmed on Friday.

A spokesman for Southeastern said: ''The overall average fare rise for Southeastern next year is 1.8 per cent, which is below the national average of 2.3 per cent. It is also slightly under the national rise set by the government for regulated fares of 1.9 per cent - which is for season tickets and peak time fares.''

Lianna Etkind, of the Campaign for Better Transport, said: ''Between 1995 and 2016 passengers have seen average fares increase by 23.5 per cent and much more needs to be done to give them a truly affordable railway.''

# Blow as bank confirms it is to shut nine more branches

NATWEST has become the latest major bank to close high street outlets, after confirming the closure of nine branches across the county.

Part of the Royal Bank of Scotland, NatWest will close branches in Bearsted, Borough Green, Broadstairs, Hythe, Rochester, Sandwich. Staplehurst, University of Kent in Canterbury and Whitstable, citing a shift in customer banking habits towards online services.

Rochester MP Kelly Tolhurst believes her constituency should have been consulted: ''While I appreciate that our banking needs are changing, I find it unacceptable that a town like Rochester will be left with only a single bank on the high street. I will be actively campaigning against the closure.''

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## Brewers in £11.85m restaurant chain takeover

BREWERY giant Shepherd Neame has splashed out £11.85million for a restaurant chain which has outlets in and around Maidstone and Ashford.

The Faversham firm has bought Village Restaurants Limited, which includes Oak on the Green and Fish on the Green in Bearsted, The Old Mill in Ashford, the Chequers on the Hill in High Halden and the Swan and Dog in Great Chart. They will now all be operated under Shepherd Neame's managed pub division.

Chief executive Jonathan Neame said: ''Over recent years we have transformed our pub profile, greatly developed our food offer and enhanced the customer experience, this is another important development in our strategy.''

# Drivers' group aims to puncture plans for cycle route scheme on the A26

**By Chris Britcher**
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A DRIVERS' organisation has slammed plans to introduce a dedicated cycle route between Tonbridge and Tunbridge Wells.

Kent County Council is proposing the route which would be part off-road and on-road of the A26.

It is being championed as part of a joint scheme by the county council and Tunbridge Wells and Tonbridge councils to promote cycling and is currently out for consultation.

It would see improvements to the cycle route between the Brook Street junction in Tonbridge and the Grosvenor Road junction in Tunbridge Wells – plans welcomed by many keen to swap four wheels for two.

However, the Kent branch of the Alliance of British Drivers has hit back at the plans.

A spokesman said: "As this is a very congested main A-road, any further hindrances will only increase congestion and is not going to force people out of their chosen form of transport, cars, and onto what in government speak calls 'mode change'.

**ROUTE:** Bike route under fire

"The only 'successful' scheme has been in London, where people have been deliberately targeted and denied transport choice, resulting in an increase in cycling, but at what cost to the general travelling public, especially beyond the bounds of London who wish to travel in? London's travel speeds now match the Edwardian period.

"At present, using the consultation figures, 85.7 per cent of daily traffic is cars and taxis with only 0.5 per cent of journeys by bicycle.

"We are told that public highways are to be shared by all and yet the percentage figures above, show the majority user, are being pushed aside for a tiny vocal minority.

"Hence 85.7 per cent are going to have their journeys even more delayed to appease 0.5 per cent."

The councils maintain it would make a big difference, saying: "A solution required to encourage more cycling use along the route which would contribute towards congestion relief, improvements in air quality and health."

The consultation runs until December 18.

**INFECTED:** Mr Stay and Mr Dymond

## Blood scandal victims head to Aids protest

TWO victims of the blood contamination scandal joined hundreds in Westminster on Thursday to stage a protest to coincide with World Aids Day.

Lee Stay, 47, from Ramsgate, exclusively went public in KoS last week to reveal he was infected with both HIV and Hepatitis C after being given a blood product used to treat his haemophilia when he was a teenager in the 1980s.

He was among thousands who were injected with contaminated blood. Many of who have now died.

And he joined Steve Dymond, 60, from Broadstairs, who was himself accidentally infected with Hepatitis C.

Mr Dymond told KoS: "We grieved and remembered 1,018 dead haemophiliacs on Thursday – the innocent victims of a concerted betrayal by government, drug companies and health professionals.

"Standing in the winter sunshine opposite the House of Commons with fellow sufferers, each possessing their own horrific stories and memories of lost loved ones, random thoughts flickered; of lives lost needlessly, and that this was a largely avoidable treatment disaster."

Both Mr Dymond and Mr Stay are calling for improved compensation payments to survivors.

## War hero dies soon after Spitfire dream

A SECOND World War hero from Cobham who got to fulfil his dream of once again flying in a Spitfire in October, has died at the age of 93.

Bill Kingman served in the RAF during the conflict and wanted one final flight. So locals raised £2,750 for him to take to the skies.

As he flew past, pupils at Cobham Primary – where he would often attend to recount his daring war-time exploits – spelt out his name and as we flew over, he did a victory roll.

''He was a true hero,'' said a close friend.

Mr Kingman, whose brother died fighting in France during the war, was awarded the prestigious Legion d'Honneur medal by the French government for his part in helping liberate France from the Nazis.

Mr Kingman's funeral will take place at Cobham Church on Monday, December 19. The service will start at the church at 2pm and at Medway crematorium at 3pm, then to The Leather Bottle pub.

## Southeastern unveils timetable changes

COMMUTERS and travellers using Southeastern's rail services are advised to check before they set out next weekend when the new timetable comes into force.

There will be changes to a number of popular commuter and Sunday services as the train operator continues to work around the on-going Thameslink work in and around the London Bridge area.

The new timetable runs from Sunday, December 11, to May 2017.

Among the changes will see the hourly service from Charing Cross to Orpington via Grove Park extended to Sevenoaks to provide two trains per hour for Chelsfield, Knockholt and Dunton Green on Sundays.

Sevenoaks to Charing Cross trains will call additionally at London Bridge and Waterloo East, but will no longer serve St Johns or New Cross.

For full details of the changes, check on Southeastern's website.

## Concert to celebrate life of David Bowie

PUPILS at David Bowie's old school will hold a special concert next month to celebrate his life on what would have been his 70th birthday.

The music icon died earlier this year in New York after battling cancer sparking global mourning for a performer who grew up in the county.

To celebrate the life of the music legend, who died on January 10, there will be a special concert at Ravens Wood School in Bromley – formerly known as Bromley Technical High School.

Mr Bowie grew up in Beckenham, when the borough of Bromley was still part of Kent, and was a well known figure as he started on his route to stardom. He once played a famous free concert at the town's bandstand.

Now the band Bowie Oddity will be performing all the classic songs from Space Oddity to Lazarus, his final album released just days before his death, in honour of the hugely influential performer.

The group consists of south London-based professional musicians, all lifelong fans of the star.

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# Light railway crash tractor driver unaware he blocked line

**By Neil Lancefield**
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A STEAM train on a miniature railway crashed into a tractor after the driver of the agricultural vehicle did not realise he was blocking the line, accident investigators revealed this week.

Between 50 and 80 passengers were on board the train when it struck the stationary tractor at a level crossing on the Romney, Hythe and Dymchurch Railway on the coast in September.

The line is a popular tourist destination.

The Rail Accident Investigation Branch (RAIB) said it would not launch a full probe into the crash, but a report published on Tuesday found the impact at 15 mph caused the steam engine and its coal car to derail and tip onto their side before coming to a rest 23 metres beyond the crossing.

The first of the 13 coaches also derailed.

No one was seriously injured in the incident, which occurred near Dymchurch at about 2.30pm on September 10.

The train driver "jumped clear of his engine shortly after the initial impact", the RAIB said.

Its investigation found that the tractor driver – who had used the crossing several times earlier in the day – was waiting for the train to pass but did not realise the front of his vehicle was partly blocking the line.

**POPULAR:** Steam service has been a tourist attraction for years

As the train approached the crossing, its driver realised the tractor was close and sounded the locomotive's whistle. On hearing this, the tractor driver became aware of his position and began to engage his reverse gear.

The train driver applied full braking about 50 metres from the crossing, but was unable to avoid the collision.

Investigators were told by the tractor driver that he had started to reverse when the crash happened.

The RAIB found that he was not using the level crossing according to instructions provided on warning signs.

He did not open and close the gates each time he crossed and failed to telephone the railway for permission to cross.

In October 2005, a tractor driver was killed after his vehicle was hit by a train travelling at 90 mph at a level crossing near Littleport, Cambridgeshire.

## Heroin dealer with blade starts jail term

A HEROIN dealer who was caught with Class A drugs worth over £2,000 and a three inch blade in Tunbridge Wells was jailed on Thursday for two years, eight months.

Mustafa Hussein, 19, of St Thomas Road, Canning Town, London, had 47 wraps of heroin and a further 25 wraps of crack cocaine stashed in his pockets when he was arrested by Kent Police on September 27.

## County town bridge work finally gets lifted

SIX months of work in the centre of Maidstone finally came to an end this week, as the Maidstone bridges roadworks were lifted.

It means new northbound lanes will be open to live traffic, travelling from Bishops Way towards the M20 via Fairmeadow. Works on the footway on the High Street will continue into the new year.

## Guns criminal jailed

A RAINHAM man has been jailed for seven-and-a-half years for two charges of possessing a prohibited firearm and one charge of attempting to possess a prohibited firearm.

When police searched the home of Troy Atherton, 56, of Shorefields, Rainham, they also discovered £250,000 worth of cannabis, which he claimed was for medicinal purposes.


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# Motorcyclist killed by car 'going wrong way' on M20

A MAJOR investigation is under way after a 60-year-old motorcyclist was killed after he was riding on the M20 and was struck by a car travelling the wrong way down the motorway.

Emergency crews were called in the early hours of Tuesday morning to the coastbound carriageway close to the slip road at junction nine at Ashford. The rider of the motorcycle, who has not yet been named, died at the scene.

It was reported the car, a blue Ford Ka, had joined the M20 coastbound carriageway at junction 10 but was driving on the wrong side of the road of the M20 towards Maidstone when it was in a head-on collision with the white and black BMW motorcycle shortly before 1am.

The road was shut for a number of hours after the crash.

Officers from the serious collision investigation unit are appealing for witnesses who may have seen the car just before the collision.

Officers would also like to hear from any motorist who may have captured the collision or driving on a dash camera or similar.

Contact SCIU on 01622 798538 or email sciu.td@kent.pnn.police.uk and quote DB/DM/230/16.

# Anger as norovirus report at leisure centre is delayed

MEDWAY Council has been slammed for "delaying" the publication of a report into a virus outbreak at a swimming pool until the new year.

More than 60 people were affected after swimming at the council-run leisure centre on the same day on October 28, with reports of sickness and diarrhoea.

The centre was closed as a precaution the following Monday while staff deep cleaned the pool and added extra chlorine to the water.

Following test results from Public Health England (PHE), the council have since confirmed that norovirus – better known as the winter vomiting bug – was the cause of the outbreak.

Labour councillors requested a report be provided at the authority's next overview and scrutiny meeting on December 8, but it will now not be discussed until January 17.

The council has stated it is unwilling to comment further until PHE has finished its investigation, which is not expected to be concluded until mid-December at the earliest.

Regeneration and communities spokesperson for the Labour group, Andy Stamp, said: "I am concerned Medway council is not being as open and up-front with the public as it should be.

"If the council are confident that they are not at fault, then I see no reason to delay publishing their own report, independently of Public Health England."

Medway Council declined to comment when contacted.

## Fast-track passport call

SOUTH east independent MEP Janice Atkinson has called for fast-track passport control queues for Brits returning to the UK.

It comes after travellers complained of lengthy queues this week. She said: ''There should be dedicated fast-track lanes with 'welcome back' notices.''

## Homeless £45k shelter

CHURCH halls across Thanet have opened their doors as part of a project to tackle growing levels of homelessness in the district.

The scheme, backed by £45,000 from the local council, will run for 13 weeks during the coldest months of the year.

## Chancellor coastal vow

CANTERBURY MP Julian Brazier has urged chancellor Philip Hammond to pump more cash into defences for coastal towns such as Whitstable.

Speaking in Westminster, Mr Hammond assured the local Tory MP the government will ''continue to invest in them''.

## Town top for low CO2

CHATHAM has the lowest levels of pollution of all towns and cities in the UK, according to new research from business website Informi.

According to the most recent figures, for 2013, it had the lowest CO2 emissions per capita – topping a poll of 65 of the largest cities and towns.

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# County's £3.6bn tourism boom

**By Chris Britcher**
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Tourism chiefs are celebrating after a record year for visitor numbers which saw 60 million people descend on the county and the local economy boosted by £3.6 billion as a result.

Independent research commissioned by tourism champions Visit Kent revealed 60.6m visitors came to Kent last year, and the county remains the third most visited destination outside of London for foreign visitors.

And that despite Operation Stack causing chaos for a number of weeks.

Across the county, visitor numbers in Kent continue to rise compared with 2013, with the highest volume of day trips, overnight trips, and holidays ever.

Tourism jobs increased by 5.9 per cent to 71,920, and the overall value of Kent's visitor economy rose five per cent to hit £3.6bn.

Chief executive of Visit Kent Sandra Matthews-Marsh said: "Last year, 2015, was undoubtedly a challenging year for the industry, with poor weather and the impact of Operation Stack during the summer. But these new figures show a rise in visitor numbers, jobs, and in the value of our industry, indicating that a lot of hard work has paid off.

"We put this picture of consistent growth down to two things – billions of investment by the public and private sector in hotels, attractions, footpaths, ferries and more, to ensure that Kent's visitor offer is world class.

"Secondly, an unceasing commitment of both the public and private sector to work together on a single vision and strategy for tourism, led by Visit Kent.

"Our approach to the visitor economy is held up as a national example, and Kent's performance is outstripping other destinations' national growth figures. With Kent councils continuing to prioritise our sector, we have succeeded in supporting a great spread of jobs across the county at all skills levels, have seen a significant improvement in hotel occupancy across the year, and boosted the overall image of Kent which benefits other industrial sectors and inward investment."

But she warned: "This is not time to be complacent. We must continue to invest in this successful strategy if Kent is to stay on top. The public sector in particular faces hard choices about resources, and the autumn statement painted a difficult picture for the years ahead.

"Although some currency fluctuations will benefit inbound tourism and staycations, if we let up our concerted joint effort for a moment there is a real threat to the continued success of thousands of businesses."

Using the industry-respected Cambridge Economic Impact Model, the research measured the volume and value of tourism in the county in 2015, and the impact of visits and visitors expenditure on the local economy.

Thanet saw one of the highest increases in visitor numbers and spend. The district saw 16.8 per cent more day trips to the area and £293million was spent in the area as a result of tourism, an increase of 19.4 per cent on 2013. Fuelled greatly by both the Turner Contemporary's continued success and the re-opening of the Dreamland theme park, as well as continued interest in Broadstairs and Ramsgate.

Canterbury had the highest number of trips in the county (7.2m) and overseas trips shot up six per cent. Other district highlights included a six per cent increase in attraction spend in Ashford, a rise in the overall value of tourism in Sevenoaks, while Tonbridge and Malling saw a large increase in the number of staying visitors.

There was a leap in the number of overnight visits from international visitors for Dover (12 per cent) and Tunbridge Wells (seven per cent), while Shepway had a seven per cent rise in overnight visits from domestic visitors. Visits also increased in Gravesham and Swale, and Medway witnessed a five per cent increase in jobs supported by tourism.

**POPULAR:** Broadstairs helped Thanet to a big visitor increase during 2015

Since Visit Kent's launch in 2002, the value of Kent's tourism industry has risen by 49 per cent.

Kent County Council cabinet member for economic development Mark Dance said: "These figures show that our investment in supporting businesses across the sector over the last decade has worked.

"The partnerships across the visitor economy are going from strength to strength and Kent remains the third most popular destination in the UK outside of London.

"We certainly won't be sitting on our laurels when it comes to increasing growth but we have a great deal to be proud of as a county."

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# Brexit puts farms under pressure

## A decline in the number of seasonal workers coming to gather in the county's crops sparked a major debate in Westminster amid concerns a lack of staff could force some to close. **Tom Pyman** reports

**THREAT:** The falling pound and Brexit is putting many workers off from coming to the UK – and that could threaten our producers.

A SHORTAGE of seasonal labour is putting Kent farms at risk of going out of business, an MP has warned.

Helen Whately, Conservative representative for Faversham and Mid Kent, issued the warning at a Westminster Hall debate where MPs called for the introduction of a fresh seasonal agricultural workers scheme, following the scrapping of the previous programme in 2013.

Statistics show that 80,000 seasonal workers were employed this year, but the number is expected to grow to 95,000 by 2019, while the National Farmers' Union (NFU) found a third of growers had experienced recruitment problems, with 69 per cent expecting it to get worse imminently.

"While recent yields have been good, half of fruit farms are making less than a two per cent margin and fruit farmers' incomes have fallen by 43 per cent over the last five years," she told MPs.

"I know that opinions were split over Brexit but one thing they are all concerned about is access to labour.

"Local organisations say they currently have four times fewer people looking for jobs than last year.

"Between July and September 2016 nearly half said they were unable to meet demand of sectors they were supplying, compared with 100 per cent in January, February and March.

"There is already a problem recruiting workers even before leaving the EU.

"I've been told there is a genuine risk of British fruit going unpicked next year because of a shortage of labour.

"There's a risk because of this shortage that they may go out of business.

"Added to their tight margins and being unable to pick all your produce and you are struggling to stay in business.

"A consequence is we will see cost of British fruit go up just at the point where we want to improve our balance of trade and fruit is a sector where I would argue we are perhaps the best in the world.

"Despite that high quality, we might see it replaced by imports and what a shame that would be, as well as economically not a good thing."

The nature of the previous scheme, which meant more than 98 per cent of workers returned home at the end of the season, and therefore didn't contribute to the UK's immigration figures, was hailed by Canterbury MP Julian Brazier.

"This group exactly fits the government's immigration policy, the controlled environment that growers and farmers provide ensures people come and go again having done an excellent job in between," he said.

However, Mrs Whately told the debate the previous pool of labour is now less incentivised to work in the UK as it perhaps previously was.

"Due to the falling pound, wages sent home are worth less than before and EU workers are feeling less welcome," she said.

"Many also have a choice as to where they work, they don't have to come and work in the UK because they are in demand across the EU.

"The question is often asked 'why can't British farmers employ British labour'?

"I know very well they have tried to recruit locally and it is possible to do that in small numbers.

"The problem is there aren't enough people looking for work, a downside of the low unemployment rate we have, which is a very good thing. I've heard people say we should solve this through mechanisation, it could be done by robots.

"Yes, there have been significant advances, processes are much more automised and horticulture is investing in mechanisation.

"There is a machine being developed for the picking of strawberries but we may be a decade off that being a prospect."

Tonbridge and Malling MP Tom Tugendhat insisted any such scheme had to be implemented correctly if agriculture in Kent was to continue to flourish.

"This is a fundamental question that is going to shape British agriculture for the next generation," he told MPs.

Adding: "Indeed it could see it go from being an industrial heart of innovation, of taste explosions, to a desert, a commuter belt, perhaps just simply dormitory villages.

"I'm speaking out because it's not just a matter for the Garden of England which we all know is the most beautiful part of the kingdom, it's a matter of migrant labour in various different areas and it's essential we get it right.

"If we get it wrong we've got a real problem because either we will find ourselves having to close down large swathes of British agriculture or we will do something which we did not intend which is create permanent migrants.

"If you think communities are complaining about a few thousand fruit pickers every now and again, the difference of pressure of them coming with family and kids will be quite different.

"These areas are challenging but what we get in Kent, because we are blessed, is agriculture and technology working side by side and that innovation spreads to the rest of the world.

"It will not be a return to the halcyon days that have not existed for some time of east end Londoners going hop picking in summer because they now have very good jobs and their holidays are spent all around the world.

"The idea that hop picking in Kent is going to be an alternative to Ibiza, I'm afraid is simply not credible for large swathes of people; perhaps for some.

"But this change on June 23 that we voted for means we have to reinvent ourselves and remember some of those old skills to do with imagination and creativity."

The government's minister for immigration, Robert Goodwill, told MPs he understood the position of the farming community and importance of the rural industries to the economy, but provided statistics that contradicted fears of a labour gap.

According to the Office for National Statistics, the number of EU citizens in the UK labour force was higher in the quarter to September 2016 than it had been a year earlier, while there were also 129,000 more workers from Bulgaria, Romania and other countries in eastern and central Europe which recently joined the EU.

"This does not suggest that there is a major exodus from the UK though I will continue to monitor the situation carefully," Mr Goodwill said.

"The government will also wish to take care to ensure that any decisions it takes in the short term need for seasonal migration schemes does not pre-empt future decisions about how the immigration system will work post-Brexit.

"There are constraints on what I can say about the future arrangements for EU citizens who want to work in the UK – the way in which we control migration post-Brexit is yet to be determined."

# Flu vaccine call after a sharp rise in death rates

**Emily King** reports on why, despite a recent failure, the free jab for those at risk is more important than ever before

A LEADING GP is urging vulnerable patients to ensure they take up the flu vaccine as weather experts issued the first warning of a prolonged cold snap during the week.

The Met Office issued a 'level two' cold weather warning on Wednesday which warned of an 80 per cent chance of severe cold weather that could have an adverse impact on the health of the very young, very old and the vulnerable.

And the cold temperatures are likely to stay into next week too.

Meanwhile, health bosses, already having to cope with increasing economic pressures, are urging those offered free flu vaccine jabs on the NHS to take advantage now.

Two years ago, the strain of influenza used in the jabs proved not to be effective in tackling the seasonal illness and there was a big spike in cases – which contributed in part to both increased cost to the NHS and a sharp spike in the number of excess winter deaths.

In Kent those figure for 2014/15, which were only confirmed this week, saw significant increases across the county. Excess winter deaths are the number of people dying compared with the average figure during the rest of the year.

While all cannot be put down to the impact of the flu vaccine's failure, it did highlight the cost to the vulnerable of failing to get inoculated .

Among the peaks highlighted in the figures from the Office of National Statistics, were 170 excess winter deaths in both Canterbury and Thanet, 150 in Shepway and 120 in Sevenoaks.

It mirrored a national rise which saw 2014/15 figures shoot up to 43,850. Provisional figures suggest that dropped to around 28,300 last winter. Local figures for last winter have not yet been confirmed.

The figures during the winter will traditionally always rise, but the increases two years ago were far higher than normal.

Dr Julian Spinks, who works at a Strood medical practice and is chairman of the Kent Local Medical Committee, which acts as a mouthpiece for the county's GPs, said it highlighted the importance of getting the jab now.

He told KoS: "These extra deaths may have been caused by the wrong vaccine but a year like that is very rare and if you have something that has a nine out of 10 success rate in being helpful you're still better off getting the jab than risking it.

"The incorrect prediction, and higher winter morality rate, will undoubtedly have added to the cost of the NHS because these people won't have dropped dead, most of them will have gone to hospital with the flu before that. It will have been horrendously expensive but at the end of the day people's lives are more important than the added cost."

Strains of flu change each year, which is why the vaccine contains three different types of the disease. But strain predictions carried out by the World Health Organisation (WHO) are never 100 per cent accurate.

**MISERABLE:** The flu can leave you bed-ridden for days - and is potentially dangerous to those at risk.

Dr Spinks explained: "The WHO looks at countries such as Australia who have already had their winter season and base their predictions for our vaccines on the illnesses they've battled. It's unusual for the vaccine not to be right, and when it isn't correct obviously this makes it less successful in keeping people safe.

"The jab cannot give you flu as there is no live flu in the injection. The vaccine triggers an immune response which may cause a fever but this will be short lived. There is around a 10 per cent chance you will get the flu at the same time you've had the vaccine but this is purely coincidental and not from the jab."

Andrew Scott-Clark is director of public health at Kent County Council. He said: "Flu can increase the risk of developing more serious illnesses such as bronchitis and pneumonia, or can make existing conditions worse, which is why it is vitally important that at risk and vulnerable people feel confident to come forward and get themselves the best defence against flu this winter."

Although the flu vaccine is not free for those who aren't at serious risk, it can be paid for and administered at your GP surgery or a local pharmacy offering the service.

Dr Angie Bone, of the extreme events team at Public Health England, says with a potentially cold winter ahead, now is the time to act.

She explained: "Cold does kill, even in places where the temperatures aren't at their lowest. Now is the time to prepare for the cold weather forecast by the Met Office, and to think of those you know who are older, very young, or have pre-existing health conditions who are particularly vulnerable. We would advise that you get the flu jab now."

Dr John Rodriguez, public health screening and immunisation lead for Kent and Medway reiterated, saying: "The flu virus is easily spread within communities, and the flu vaccine is the best form of protection against it."

An NHS spokesman added: "Studies have shown that the flu jab does work and will help prevent you getting the flu.

"It won't stop all flu viruses and the level of protection may vary between people, so it's not a 100 per cent guarantee that you'll be flu-free, but if you do get flu after vaccination it's likely to be milder and shorter-lived than it would otherwise have been.

"Over time, protection from the injected flu vaccine gradually decreases and flu strains often change. So new flu vaccines are produced each year which is why people advised to have the flu jab need it every year too."

Some people face a greater risk of developing more serious complications if they become infected with the virus.

Particularly vulnerable are pregnant women, people aged over 65, and people who suffer from diabetes, asthma, heart, respiratory and kidney conditions, and other illnesses where immunity from infections is reduced.

## STEPS TO AVOID THE FLU

THE NHS have advised on ways to steer clear of the virus if you're not eligable for the free flu vaccination.

- Always wash your hands regularly with soap and warm water, as well as regularly cleaning surfaces such as your computer keyboard, telephone and door handles to get rid of germs.
- Using tissues to cover your mouth and nose when you cough or sneeze.
- Putting used tissues in a bin as soon as possible.
- You can also help stop the spread of flu by avoiding unnecessary contact with other people while you're infectious. You should stay off work or school until you're feeling better.

## ...AND DON'T GET CAUGHT OUT BY THE NOROVIRUS EITHER

IT'S not just the flu which is grabbing the headlines. Norovirus, which causes diarrhoea and vomiting, is one of the most common stomach bugs in the UK.

It's also called the 'winter vomiting bug' because it's more common in winter, although you can catch it at any time of year.

Highly contagious it is rarely dangerous but is very unpleasant.

The NHS offers the following advice to stop it spreading:

- Stay off work or school until at least 48 hours after the symptoms have passed. You should also avoid visiting anyone in hospital during this time.
- Wash your hands frequently and thoroughly with soap and water, particularly after using the toilet and before preparing food. Don't rely on alcohol hand gels, as they do not kill the virus.
- Disinfect any surfaces or objects that could be contaminated. It's best to use a bleach-based household cleaner.
- Wash any items of clothing or bedding that could have become contaminated separately on a hot wash to ensure the virus is killed.
- Don't share towels and flannels.
- Flush away any infected poo or vomit in the toilet and clean the surrounding area.
- Avoid eating raw, unwashed produce and only eat oysters from a reliable source, as oysters can carry norovirus.

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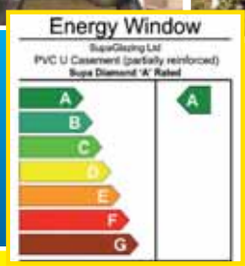


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KL 1/16

# ‘Apocalyptic’ future for our schools as £40m fund cuts bite

Figures produced by two major teaching unions highlight just how much each of Kent’s schools are set to lose between now and 2020. Education chiefs say the figures are realistic and warn we may even have to drop to a four-day school week

**Exclusive: By Tom Pyman**
tom.pyman@archant.co.uk

SCHOOLS in Kent are facing “apocalyptic” cuts of a staggering £40m over the next four years, according to new figures.

And according to one union, it could mean Kent faces the introduction of a four-day school week to make ends meet.

The data, calculated by the National Union of Teachers (NUT) and the Association of Teachers and Lecturers (ATL), includes proposed breakdowns for all primary and secondary schools with figures demonstrating an estimated reduction in the school’s annual budget by 2020 in real terms, the amount lost per pupil at each school and the number of teacher job losses as a consequence.

For Kent, it predicts a £40.3m budget change, a loss of £208 per pupil and more than a thousand teaching jobs slashed.

The unions’ calculations are made up of a number of factors including inflation of eight per cent, continuation of a minimum funding guarantee until 2020 and a 75 per cent cut to the Education Services Grant (ESG), as announced by George Osborne last year.

It assumes a national funding formula will be the one proposed by the f40 – a group of lowest funded education authorities in England.

The formula is set to be introduced from 2018 following a consultation which will set out the Department for Education’s (DfE) plans for how the formula will be implemented including the impact on schools and local authorities.

The DfE itself has unequivocally slammed the unions’ figures, describing them as “irresponsible scaremongering”, but education chiefs across the county have thrown their weight behind the forecasts, which paint a grim picture for the future of education.

Many expressed dismay at barely even a fleeting mention of funding or protection for school budgets in Philip Hammond’s Autumn Statement last week.

The chancellor did, however, announce £50m of new capital funding to support the expansion of existing grammar schools in each year from 2017-18.

Schools in nearby West Sussex warned earlier this year of cutting teaching hours, even suggesting a four-day week, unless they are given emergency financial help from the government.

The NUT’s divisional secretary for Kent, Christine Dickinson, told KoS from her discussions with teachers, those fears are making their way across the south east.

“I think in Kent that’s something that would have to be considered – it’s very, very worrying,” she said.

“We are in a dire situation so these estimations are not scaremongering, it’s as accurate a figure as we can get and we haven’t heard any indication of further information being made imminently available.

“The biggest concerns are the narrowing of the curriculum, making teachers redundant and having to increase class sizes which impacts the quality of education our children are receiving and problems with behaviour.

“I have been told the DfE does recognise that there is a problem in education but there is no sign of them doing anything to help it, other than expanding grammar schools, which is not a suitable route for all.

“I hope there will be some respite from government but I see no sign of it.

“Schools are now trying to raise money in other ways – we even saw parents being charged for nativity plays last week.”

The Canterbury Academy is set to be one of the worst hit over the next four years, according to the figures, suffering an estimated budget change of some £571,423.

The impact of that is a reduction of £553 in funding per pupil and a predicted 15 losses of teaching jobs.

Head Phil Karnavas told KoS: “If true, if close to being true, then cuts of such magnitude can only result in significant staff loss, increasing class sizes, further narrowing of the curriculum, the end of most after school activities, deteriorating resources and the increasing marginalisation of vulnerable students.

“Across the public sector, including schools, the system is actually held together by the ‘goodwill’ of the people who work in it and who genuinely care, and want to make things better, for others.

“But there will come a point where too much is taken for granted and too little is given in return. We may be close to, or at that, point.

“For some Kent primary and secondary schools, especially a lot of non-selectives, the suggested cut is so significant that with further rises in pension and National Insurance contributions, inflation and no protection it

**ANXIOUS:** Kent County Council's education chief Roger Gough

would be little less than apocalyptic."

The aim of a fair funding formula is to ensure funding per pupil is much more even across the country, but education secretary Justine Greening pushed back the announcement of the formula when she was appointed to the post by Theresa May earlier this year.

Kent County Council's cabinet member for education, Roger Gough, said the decision was understandable, but left a lot of schools somewhat in limbo.

"Delaying it for a year is not good news for Kent schools because the assumption is we would benefit," he told KoS.

"It wouldn't be huge, perhaps only one or two per cent on the schools' budget but it's better than nothing.

"We had mixed views in that we were in favour of a general move towards a national formula but we were less happy about how it proposed doing it – specifically to nationalise Schools Block, money which goes directly to schools for most of its mainstream activities.

"I think in broad brush terms the position is as described [in the unions' estimations].

"There are a number of things we just don't know and they have to

**Continued on page 16**

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**Continued from page 15**

make certain assumptions which may or may not be entirely correct, but it's as good an assumption as there is out there.

"We have been moving in this direction for some years, schools have been aware of this and it's only going to get harder."

Canterbury Academy's Mr Karnavas added: "A national fair funding formula has been something of an educational holy grail which would lead to more money for most schools.

"In Kent there was optimism. Kent has historically been towards the lower end of local authority funding per pupil and so in the redistribution it was assumed that some schools in other areas would lose out but Kent schools would gain.

"The proposed figures initially suggested approximately £200 more for pupils aged 4-14 and £750 more for 14-16 year olds in Kent.

"This new formula does not include sixth form but that funding, which is gloriously labyrinthine, has already been cut by over 15 per cent."

The DfE says the formula would help end historic unfairness in the system, but an apparent lack of clarity has left many education chiefs alienated, particularly by its plan to turn all schools into academies over the next six years.

Cllr Gough said: "There was a consultation in which the government proposed that local authorities should lose their duty on school improvement.

"They should essentially 'step back' from it from the summer of next year and the reduction of the education services grant (ESG) which was set to be phased out anyway, would be brought forward rapidly.

**SQUEEZE:** Schools are facing an uncertain future due to cuts; it's a major worry says Peter Read, right

"It would function for a few months in 17/18 and then disappear.

"That would land Kent County Council a £4m funding hole in 2017/18 growing to a £7m one for the following financial year.

"The government proposes to have full academisation in the system by 2022, yet the funding will dry up before that by some period of time and we will still have those duties.

"How it all works out is unclear and we'll see the government's response to the first phase of the consultation probably in the coming weeks."

Education consultant and former Gravesend head teacher Peter Read told KoS the unions' figures were indeed only speculation, but gave an accurate representation of the situation schools across Kent are finding themselves in.

"Talking to a number of head teachers, my understanding is there are major concerns about budgets cuts," he said. "It's clear there are cuts and it's very disappointing that government has not seen fit to protect it in the Autumn Statement.

"Whether these figures are an accurate representation, I couldn't say, but many head teachers are talking about having to make cuts and there are teachers being made redundant.

"There are suggestions these don't affect grammar schools as much but they have taken a big hit in sixth form funding.

"I do fear that many schools are going to find issues in the next few years and I am very disappointed for the children of Kent that government no longer appears to give education the priority it needs.

"Given pressures on school budgets at this time, I can't believe government really knows what it's doing."

Responding to the criticism raised by the unions' figures, a DfE spokesperson said: "This is irresponsible scaremongering based on speculation. It's unfair and confusing for parents, pupils and schools themselves.

"We are due to publish a new fairer funding formula, and as the NUT and ATL admit, their speculative figures do not take that into account.

"In reality the schools budget has been protected and in 2016-17 totals over £40billion, the highest ever on record.

"The government's fairer funding proposals will ensure that areas with the highest need attract the most funding and end the historic unfairness in the system."

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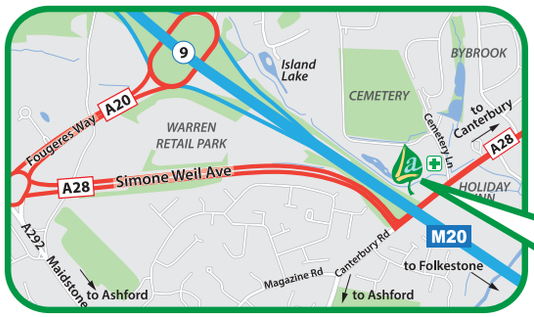


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# Talking turkey: How farmers are getting in a festive flap

## Tens of thousands of birds are reared in the county ready for our dinner tables at Christmas. And now we're all set to rush to put in our orders from Kent's farms

**By Chris Murphy**
editorial@kosmedia.co.uk

TURKEY farmers across the county are bracing themselves for a last minute surge of bookings as thousands of the birds are ready to form the centrepiece of Christmas dinner tables.

Tens of thousands of the animals are reared in Kent, with many producers seeking to provide a classic bird with a taste to ensure they stand out against the mass-produced meat available in many supermarkets.

And despite many families looking at alternatives to the traditional festive treat, there is no let up in demand.

Clive Wreathall, of Appledore Turkeys, is the county's biggest single producer.

He explains: "The turkey business, while fairly rigid, is a good one for us, and once more this year it is all running to plan.

"People do tend to leave it to the last minute, but those who want a turkey always make sure they get a turkey.

"It is getting a little later each year before firm orders are placed, but we are never in doubt the orders will come."

Farmers order their birds for rearing in January for arrival in around June.

Sales figures of about 20,000 are never fully secured until the last week before Christmas.

Mr Wreathall told us: "We like to keep our business on a level keel and ensure some consistency from year to year. Things have not really changed in the turkey market for years. There is little room for expansion as it is only at Christmas that they sell in anything like large enough numbers.

"The rest of the year is very flat in the turkey industry, which is why we like to be consistent with our production numbers."

Their birds are delivered across the south east to a selection of butchers, farm shops and other retail outlets.

Mr Wreathall adds: "It is a sign we only deal in quality products and just utilise traditional animal husbandry methods.

"We have genuine care and concern about all our birds so they live a long and healthy life, enjoying natural diets and the freedom to roam grassy paddocks. They are all round the buildings – they are bloody everywhere to tell the truth.

"This contributes to the turkeys' distinctive taste and texture – ideal for the festive season."

The slaughter season starts at the beginning of December.

The farmer explains: "We have to hang the meat for a minimum of 10 days to improve the flavour. That is the crux of what we do. It is a bit like hanging beef, it gives a better eating experience, which is what it is all about."

At the other end of the scale is Kim Everett, who has run Hollin Root Farm in Frittenden, near Cranbrook, with her husband Simon for 10 years.

She said: "We started out with 10 turkeys, but over the years have gradually built up to 400 today.

"It is a last minute thing, but we do have regular customers who order their bird in September.

"We take orders over the phone or email and then people come along to us to pick them up in the office where there are some very big fridges with boxes of birds labelled with people's names.

"At the end of the season, we check on how many orders or requests there were and decide how many chicks we order for the following year. It has been slowly rising every year. We could supply more, but I would not want to do more than 1,000 because we are a small family concern that takes quality incredibly seriously."

They raise to something called the Golden Turkey Standard and have won champion turkey at Ashford Livestock Market.

Mrs Everett said: "We also do rare breed lamb, pork and beef, and some people like those as an alternative to turkey.

"We started with turkeys after I read somewhere about how some birds are raised and it worried me. Tasting ours over some of those in supermarkets is a real eye-opener."

Their bronze turkey is £10.30 per kilogram for under 5kg; £9.30 for 5-9kg, and there is a 10 per cent discount over 9kg. Considerably higher prices than the likes of Tesco, but a very different quality.

Jill Sargent is in charge of business development at Produced in Kent – the food and drink champions for the county. She told us: "As always the Garden of England can provide for

THINK
SQ
CHRISTMAS ENTERTAINMENT
SATURDAY 3RD DECEMBER
• Invicta Ukulele band | 12noon – 3pm
• Stilt walking balloon artists | 11.30 – 4pm (3 x 30 minute)
SUNDAY 4TH DECEMBER
• Ashford Community Choir 12noon & 1.30pm
• Carol Singing by Ashford Knoll Girl Guides 2pm – 3.30pm
SATURDAY 10TH DECEMBER
• Rock Choir | 12noon & 1.30pm
• Circus Antics stilt walkers | 11.30 – 4pm (3 x 30 minute)
SUNDAY 11TH DECEMBER
• Ashford Sings choir | 12noon & 1.30pm
SATURDAY 17TH DECEMBER
• Salvation Army
• Giant Reindeer and herder | 11.30 – 4pm (3 x 30 minute)
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**GOBBLE:** Kent's producers are focusing on quality rather than quantity when it comes to our feathered friends

our Christmas table, whether it's a traditional turkey or something a little different.

"Hard working producers like Hollin Root Farm have spent many months raising their bronze turkeys for our Christmas table. They are slower growing than the commercial hybrid and suit a free range system.

"They are often twice the age of commercial turkeys and this comes through in the delicious flavour.

"If you want a different bird why not try a goose? Butcher SW Doughty in Doddington is well known for its own flock of geese, who guard the apple orchard next to the butcher's shop through the summer.

**TASTY:** Nationwide, two thirds of us will settle down for turkey at Christmas

"If you prefer something a little different, how about a rib of beef or joint of venison? There are plenty of butchers shops and farmers markets who will be happy to help you decide."

Semi-retired Tony Fleck, 70, is another who is keen on preserving quality over quantity.

He produces 150 geese and 1,250 turkeys at Kent Turkeys Ltd, at Woolpack Corner Farm, in Biddenden.

He said: "We have been doing this for 15 years and business has been running steady for all that time. I concentrate on the Kelly Bronze bird.

"Even the prices have stayed consistent at around £11 a kilo and a breast roast is £21 a kilo.

"Just about every customer comes back year after year."

Nationally, the number of turkeys eaten at Christmas has been running at 10 million for several years.

Trade group British Turkey said: "Two thirds of UK consumers will be sitting down to enjoy British turkey this December 25 proving turkey is still top of the table for Christmas.

"Some 52 per cent opt for a whole turkey, while 41 per cent go for the convenience of a crown, plus seven per cent choose a smaller turkey joint.

"The average spend per diner is just over £20 with wine and champagne being the items that most consumers are likely to 'splash out' on."

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**CHANGE:** Nigel Farage stepped aside as interim Ukip leader to greet new leader Paul Nuttall. Right, Chris Wells, leader of Thanet District Council.

# Council chief's delight as Nuttall takes over as Ukip commander

**Tom Pyman** gauges reaction to Nigel Farage's latest departure for the party that keeps on growing...

THE leader of Ukip's only council in the UK has insisted the party is "the biggest threat on earth" as it begins a new chapter under fresh leadership this week.

Paul Nuttall was elected as successor to Nigel Farage on Monday, and told party members they needed to unite following a summer of discontent and growing concerns that after the EU referendum result, it's future is unclear.

The party is hugely influential in Kent – not only forming the official opposition to the Conservatives on Kent County Council, but also winning control of Thanet District Council. It even, briefly, delivered the party only its second ever MP when Mark Reckless defecting from the Tories in 2014 and won the resulting by-election coloured purple. He did, however, then lose to the Conservatives at the general election six months later.

But Ukip has faced some considerable challenges in recent weeks.

An investigation was launched by the Electoral Commission the week before into whether Ukip accepted "impermissible donations" from the Alliance for Direct Democracy in Europe (ADDE).

An audit found the ADDE financed polling in the UK between February and December last year, including pre-election surveys in South Thanet, where Mr Farage was beaten by Craig Mackinlay.

It was the latest in a series of controversies, including the defection of former Rochester schoolgirl Diane James, who led the party for just 18 days earlier this year, and the infamous "handbags in Strasbourg" incident which saw a "clear the air" meeting of MEPs explode into an "altercation" which later had one of them ending up in hospital.

Mr Nuttall said following his election: "Today is the day that we start to put the Ukip jigsaw back together. It's day zero, it's a new beginning.

"That means not only paying lip service to my call for unity, but practising what we preach.

"It means all factions of the party coming together, letting bygones be bygones and sitting round the table together and sorting out our differences.

"This party has a duty to unite. Those at the top of the party owe it to our membership and the four million who voted for us last year but also to the 17.5 million who went out and voted for Brexit."

However, after Britain voted to leave the European Union in June, Tory MP Mr Mackinlay, who was deputy leader of an early incarnation of Ukip before switching to the Tories, told us "the reason for their existence has now gone" and said he wouldn't rule out defections from Ukip back towards his party.

Mr Mackinlay and the Conservatives are facing their own investigation into allegations they broke spending rules in South Thanet last year, though the MP and the party have repeatedly rejected the claims.

Thanet District Council leader Chris Wells welcomed the appointment of Mr Nuttall, rejected any suggestion of cracks forming and insisted the future remains bright for Ukip.

> **"We have real support. The Tories are not worried about the Labour Party, but they are frightened of Ukip. We are the biggest threat on earth."**
>
> **Chris Wells,**
> Leader, Thanet District Council

"I am not in the slightest bit concerned [by the Electoral Commission probe] having been involved in planning the campaign myself, I'm quite relaxed," Cllr Wells told us.

"I don't see why Diane James leaving the party is negative, either, and where Ukip is nationally and locally shows we have real support.

"The Conservatives are not worried about the Labour Party, but they are frightened of Ukip – we are the biggest threat on earth."

He added that Mr Nuttall was: "The outstanding candidate on offer, who will attract the support of MEPs, councillors, and assembly members across the land, and, more importantly, fire the imagination and enthusiasm of party members.

"From Manchester to Margate, Hartlepool to Liverpool, or Thurrock to Cannock, Paul Nuttall's Ukip can grow an electoral revolution across the length and breadth of our land, not focussed, as are others, on the unrepresentative lives of London's elite."

Ukip has unquestionably overtaken Labour in Kent, as perhaps evidenced when a red seat turned purple in an Ashford local election back in August, and Mr Nuttall urged supporters to continue that momentum on a nationwide basis.

"I want to replace the Labour Party and make Ukip the voice of patriotic Britain," he said.

"The country needs a strong Ukip more now than ever before, for if Ukip ceases to be an electoral force, there will be no impetus on Theresa May and her government to give us real Brexit and we will end up with some mealy-mouthed, backsliding version.

"This will be a betrayal of the British people and a united Ukip under my leadership will never, ever allow that to happen."

Those sentiments were echoed by Westerham's Nigel Farage, who had returned as interim leader following Ms James' resignation. He said: "Old Labour voters have absolutely nowhere else to go other than to come to Ukip."

Medway councillor and Labour's candidate in May's police and crime commissioner election, Tristan Osborne, told us earlier this year his party was under no illusions of a post-Brexit threat from Ukip.

"There are anti-establishment angry voters and I think Ukip will always have a share for people who put their finger up to the system," he said.

"The Lib Dems won most of those pre-2010 but now Ukip is seen as the second biggest party in Kent and they are absolutely a threat and we shouldn't write them off in a million years.

"We need to be making a marked improvement to overcome them as well as the Tories."

Mr Farage promised not to be "a back seat driver" but said he would be available to offer support to the new leader if asked.

He added: "If there isn't a significant electoral threat – and that can only frankly come from Ukip – then the chances are that what we voted for in that referendum will now be significantly watered down. That must not be allowed to happen.

"I think everything is to play for and I am happy and confident that I'm handing this over at a good time."

The outgoing leader, who serves as an MEP for the south east, also vowed last week that he would "have to" stand again in South Thanet if allegations against the Conservatives led to a re-run, and was backed in his pledge by Cllr Wells.

"If there were a by-election in South Thanet we would pick the right candidate," he said.

"I cannot imagine Nigel would not be welcome but other people may apply as well."

Despite Mr Farage's promise to stand if opportunity arose, he is this week returning to the US "purely as a tourist" following reports he was looking to move across the Atlantic from his Kent home.

# A Kentish Christmas

Your guide to a perfect festive season in 2016

## Skating, Santa and much more besides

We look at some of the key festive events taking place in the county

## How to choose the perfect Christmas tree

Essential guide for your traditional centrepiece


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Scotch Eggs
Cocktail Sausages
Sausage Rolls
Pork Pies
Cake Selection

**Package Two: £9.50 per person**

Slices of French Stick
Seasoned Potato Wedges
Rice
Mixed Salad
Your choice of two of the following: Chef's Chicken Curry, Chilli Con Carne, Lasagne, Cottage Pie

**Package Three: £10.50 per person**

Cold meat platter: Beef, Gammon, Turkey
Pate
Slices of French Stick
Coleslaw
Potato Salad
Mixed Salad
Poached Dressed Salmon

# Welcome to A Kentish Christmas 2016

# Your gateway to festive season

WELCOME to the second and final edition of A Kentish Christmas – our special supplement to celebrate what is surely the happiest season of them all.

Inside this edition we have a blend of things to see and do in this great county of ours; including, hopefully, some great attractions right on your doorstep.

More so than ever, the level of effort invested in making the season of goodwill truly sparkle is clearly apparent and you only have to stroll along the high streets of our towns, cities or villages to see the lights and sense the excitement growing in young and old alike.

But Christmas is far more than simply dipping in and out of your pocket. The real magic is in being with your nearest and dearest, and creating memories that live on for years to come.

After all, I am sure we can all remember our own past Christmasses – filled with light and laughter. There is often a tinge of sadness too, of remembering those relatives and friends who we shared those times with who are no longer with us. But we should revel in those memories. Because keeping them alive in our minds keeps their spirit vibrant.

There is something about the time of year as a consequence. It provides us with a snap shot of where we are in our lives and who surrounded us at such a key period. More so, one could argue, than any other single time.

Which is why it is so important each Christmas is celebrated in style – whether that is by organising memorable days out with friends and family, or simply being with those whom we hold most precious.

After all, most of our special memories are simply of enjoying a meal with our loved ones, or snoozing in front of the television surrounded by them after a hearty lunch or playing a board game.

Certainly, inside these pages there is a little for everyone. From special events offering ice rinks and the chance to visit Father Christmas in his grotto before he sets off on the longest day of his year, to carol concerts held in our cathedrals.

In addition what about doing some of your Christmas shopping at a picturesque festive market? Whether its decorations, cards, gifts or food and drink, there are some great venues for you to visit and enjoy a glass of mulled wine while you do so.

We've even included a special section on how to choose the perfect Christmas tree. Many people have already put their tree up, of course, but for plenty of others that all important decision is one they are pondering right now. So check out our guide to make sure you're picking a healthy tree and one which will truly reflect the spirit of Christmas.

Talking of plant life, we've also got a special page highlighting some books for those who enjoy dabbling in their gardens – surely the perfect gift or stocking filler for the green-fingered among us – or those who want to be in 2017!

In short, everything you need to get into the Christmas mood is right here!

All you need to do is sit back, enjoy it, and work out just how to make your Christmas season as memorable as those of years gone by.

So from everyone here at Kent on Sunday, we wish you a very happy Christmas and the most glorious start to the new year.

And before you know where you are, no doubt the 2017 edition of A Kentish Christmas will be upon us.

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LAURA WHITMORE
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PETER JAMES' NOT DEAD ENOUGH
WED 25 - SAT 28 JANUARY
David Walliams
The FIRST HIPPO on the MOON
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JOSEPH AND THE AMAZING TECHNICOLOR DREAMCOAT
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**GRAND:** Hever Castle pays tribute to the pantomime tradition this month

# Get in the spirit of the season at host of events

## Make memories that will last forever by attending one of the many festive days out around Kent

WITH Christmas now just around the corner, Kent's festive events offering is bigger than ever before.

There is something for everyone, from ice rinks to the chance to visit Santa in his grotto. From live music evenings and train journeys with a magical twist, you can be sure of creating memories that will last forever.

Here, we take a look at just some of the events taking place over the coming weeks in the lead up to the big day.

**ALIGHT:** Dreamland turns into Frosted Fairground again

**FROSTED FAIRGROUND, MARGATE**

Margate's retro themepark, Dreamland, transforms into the Frosted Fairground once again for a winter wonderland this Christmas.

Guests will be able to enjoy performances from local school choirs and community groups as well as music on the bandstand, pop-up panto, carol singing, and Teddy and Betty's Christmas Show. As well, of course, as all the rides to get your pulse going.

Rebecca Ellis, events and programming director at Dreamland, said: "It's suitable for all ages and the Frosted Fairground will guarantee to get everyone in the festive spirit and spread the Christmas cheer."

The fairground is open on from Saturday, December 3, to January 2, 2017, (not open Christmas Day).

**BLUEWATER, GREENHITHE**

Kent's biggest shopping centre Bluewater boasts festive treats for all ages this year.

With a backdrop of one of their beautiful lakes, guests will be able to enjoy hot drinks and Christmas refreshments from the alpine-style cabins.

Visitors can also skate and twirl around a giant Christmas tree – a festive experience for families and friends, with special events and lessons available for beginners.

Santa's grotto also holds a surprise. Kids will have to venture through the elves' workshop to reach Santa but before they meet him, they'll see Paddington Bear along the way too.

The grotto is open until Christmas Eve, while the ice rink will continue until January 2, 2017.

**TUNBRIDGE WELLS**

A musical Christmas is on the cards in Tunbridge Wells as its annual ice rink provides the perfect picturesque setting for an experience to treasure. And there's more besides. A collaboration be-

tween the Assembly Hall Theatre and The Forum is bringing live music to the rink in Calverley Grounds.

The live music nights will feature a collection of musical talent from the south east bringing a festive atmosphere to the ice rink. The bands will be playing rock, indie and folk.

Entrance to the music nights is free and the evenings are set to delight residents every Thursday from 7pm-9pm until December 15.

The ice rink is open until January 2, 2017.

**ONCE UPON A CHRISTMAS, HEVER CASTLE**

Children and adults all enjoy a great panto... oh yes they do! This Christmas Hever Castle celebrates the history of pantomime in Once Upon a Castle.

Walk through the rooms of the castle, adorned with beautiful decorations and welcoming log fires and learn about the evolution of pantomime, from its origins through to the well-loved stories and characters that we know today.

**GROTTO:** Visit Father Christmas

In front of the castle, ride the carousel and enjoy vintage fairground stalls including a coconut shy, swing boats and a hall of mirrors (£1 per go).

Follow the snowy Christmas trail and discover the story of Jack and the Beanstalk as you wander through the illuminated gardens as dusk falls.

Once Upon a Castle is open weekdays and weekends until Christmas Eve, and suggested last entry is 3pm.

**SPIRIT OF CHRISTMAS, BIRCHINGTON**

Birchington's Quex Park really does have the Spirit of Christmas this festive season with a host of events throughout December.

It's the biggest event of its kind in Thanet and has something to attract everyone with a variety of things to see and do.

The ice rink will run from 10am and close at 9pm daily (last skate 8pm) and skate hire is free. Or if you don't feel at home on the ice, there's the Christmas market to keep you more than occupied with an eclectic number of stalls selling a range of goods from Christmas Spirits to gifts.

The bar and café marquee is fully licenced to serve all alcoholic and non-alcoholic Christmas drinks, while the grotto and elf express will provide festive fun for kids of all ages.

The Spirit of Christmas continues until January 2, 2017.

**SANTA SPECIALS, VARIOUS LOCATIONS**

Take a magical steam train journey to meet Santa this Christmas with the Kent and East Sussex Railway's popular Santa Special trains.

At Tenterden Station, the beautiful Victorian carousel provides unlimited free rides for the young and young at heart alike before boarding your special service.

On board the festively decorated steam trains, you'll meet Santa during the one-hour ten-minute return journey to the 'North Pole'. Look out for his elf helpers with their sacks full of lovely presents – every child receives an age appropriate gift from Santa himself while teenagers (13 to 15) receive a scrummy box of festive chocolates. Everyone receives complimentary refreshments too – a mince pie and choice of soft or alcoholic drink for adults and a soft drink and chocolate bar for children.

Or why not try a Santa service from the Romney Marsh, Hythe and Dymchurch Light Railway?

Depart from Hythe station for the 30-minute journey to New Romney where your hour of festive fun begins. See Santa arrive on his sleigh and visit him in his grotto for the children to receive their gift. Enjoy seasonal refreshments in the Heywood Buffet, have fun in the Model Railway Exhibition and play in the 'snow' before boarding your train again for the 30-minute journey back to Hythe.

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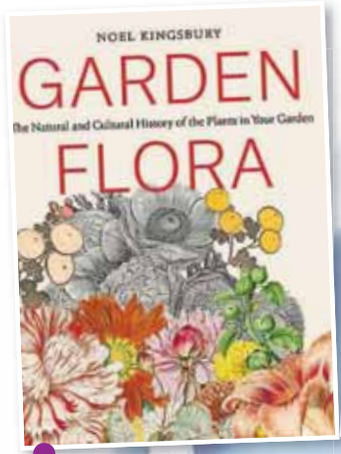
# Growing green-fingered gift idea



AS winter beckons and thoughts of the festive season are upon us, now is a good time to plan new beds and borders, find inspiring ideas for your garden and work out how you want your garden to look next year.

Gardening books provide a wealth of inspiration – so whether you're looking for a gift to put under the tree or simply want to examine a new or traditional garden style yourself, here are a few of the books which should get the green-fingered creative juices flowing...

**Thenford: The Creation Of An English Garden by Michael and Anne Heseltine (Head of Zeus, £40):** This coffee table tome tells the story in words and pictures of Michael and Anne Heseltine's Northamptonshire home, charting the development of the garden over 40 years. It started off as an overgrown woodland, but today there's an arboretum with more than 3,000 varieties of trees and shrubs, medieval fish ponds, a rill water feature and a beautifully restored walled garden.

**RHS A-Z Encyclopedia of Garden Plants, edited by Christopher Brickell (DK, £75):** This is a Christmas gift to end all Christmas gifts for gardeners, a beautiful reference tool packed with fantastic images and clear descriptions and growing advice for more than 15,000 plants. It's been updated with more than 5,000 new plant entries and new photographs and comes in a majestic presentation box.

**House Of Plants: Living With Succulents, Air Plants And Cacti by Caro Langton and Rose Ray (Frances Lincoln, £20, out Nov 3):** If you love indoor greenery with the minimum of fuss, this book focuses on houseplants that are perfect for urban living, showing both the aspiring and experienced plant enthusiast how to nurture, share and enjoy them, as well as arranging them stylishly in the home.

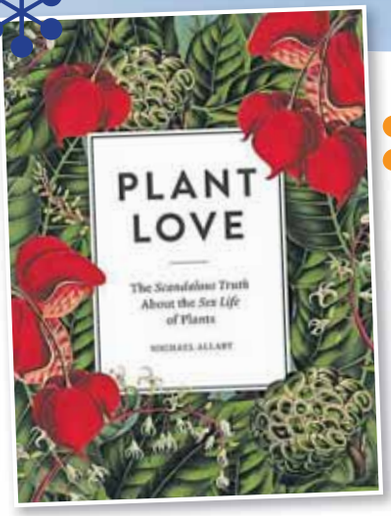
**The Quest For Shakespeare's Garden by Roy Strong (Thames & Hudson, £14.95):** Published in association with Shakespeare Birthplace Trust, Sir Roy Strong's lively account traces the origins of the Elizabethan garden and tells the story of the Bard's own garden. Accompanied by quotations from Shakespeare's works, it features beautiful illustrations of his gardens, past and present.

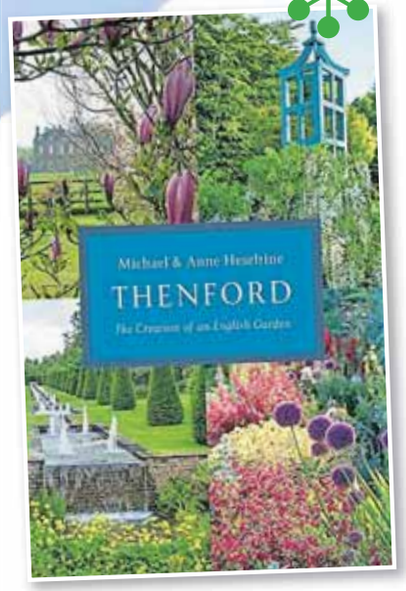
**Gardenista: The Definitive Guide To Stylish Outdoor Spaces by Michelle Slatalla with the editors of Gardenista (Artisan, £28.99):** Full page pictures illustrate the terrific ideas offered by this first book from the team behind Gardenista.com. With more than 1.1 million visitors a month, Gardenista has become one of the online destination source books for garden and exterior design fans. It features tours of 12 outdoor spaces including a fairy-tale garden, a cottage garden and a posh and pampered greenhouse.

**Plant Love: The Scandalous Truth About The Sex Life Of Plants by Michael Allaby (Filbert Press, £14.99):** Want to know about botanic sex? Find out in this revealing stocking-filler, an expose of more than 200 of nature's most unseemly liaisons. There's nectar and pollen, but there are also teasers which deliver nothing and cheating among plants takes many forms. Find out how avocado flowers are female one day and male the next, how the violet really does shrink and how giraffes pollinate certain trees.

**Garden Flora by Noel Kingsbury (Timber Press, £29.99):** Did you know that epimediums contain a compound similar to that which you find in Viagra? Or that ancient armies were reduced by eating poisonous rhododendron honey? This fascinating book examines the cultural and natural history of 133 of the most beloved garden plants, revealing their survival strategies, growth habit and uses. It includes everything from the acer to the zinnia.

**Vertical Gardens by Leigh Clapp and Hattie Klotz (New Holland Publishers, £16.99):** Gardening no longer needs to be confined to the ground. If you have limited space, this innovative guide offers quirky low-maintenance, space-saving, water-smart solutions, with ideas for vertical gardening on your balcony, your rooftop or courtyard. Learn how to turn bare garden spaces, such as a blank wall or fence, into living walls where you can tend edibles, annuals or even perennials.





# Get in the market for a great day out

## Christmas markets are becoming increasingly popular and there are some great ones to look out for in Kent

**GIFTS:** Enjoy a day out in style across the county

SEASONAL produce, hot chocolate, gifts and decorations together can only mean one thing – It's Christmas market season.

There are plenty to choose from across the county, big and small, so be sure to keep an eye out for those.

Here are just three worthy of a visit.

### LEEDS CASTLE

Leeds Castle delights in hosting the annual Christmas market on the Cedar Lawn overlooking the castle. Discover a splendid array of seasonal gifts, toys, festive decorations, specialist food and drink and meet the reindeer and birds of prey.

Leeds Castle Market

In the centre of the market, enjoy nostalgic fairground attractions, children's rides and a daily programme of live musical entertainment. Take a ride on the Victorian carousel and the high flying 'chair-o-planes' or take a leisurely trip on the big wheel for a spectacular view of the castle.

The market is included in normal admission prices but small additional charges apply for the rides.

The Christmas market is open every weekend up to December 18 then December 22 and 23 from 10am to 5pm.

### CANTERBURY

This year's Whitefriars Christmas market in Canterbury features over 40 colourful cabins selling seasonal produce, gifts, decorations, and food and drink. This festive season the market includes a new food court, so you can all enjoy your choice of scrummy Christmas goodies together.

Canterbury Market

The stalls stay open until December 24. Opening hours will be 10am to 6pm Monday to Saturday (later on December 21/22/23) and 10am to 5pm Sundays.

Children will also love Canterbury's ever popular Santa's grotto experience in Whitefriars Square. It will be open from December 3 until December 24, from 11am to 4pm Sunday to Friday and 10.30am to 5pm Saturdays (closed December 5/6/12/13).

Make some magical elf dust and receive a commemorative certificate and quality Christmas gift from Santa with a cheeky elf theme! Admission is £4 per child.

### ROCHESTER

Set in the historic and picturesque Rochester Castle gardens, Rochester Christmas market visitors can enjoy a selection of festive foods including mulled wine, hot chocolate with Baileys and roasted chestnuts as they browse stalls for unique gift ideas and unusual stocking fillers.

Rochester Market

Features of the market include magical festive atmosphere with live music, luxury and unique gifts throughout the market, a Bavarian village and craft fair, tasty treats from local producers, easy access to historic Rochester High Street with its eclectic mix of independent retailers, eateries and period architecture, and a step back in time to a Victorian Christmas to meet some of Dickens' heroes and villains as part of the Dickensian Christmas Festival which runs this weekend.

The market is open from 10am to 7pm on December 3 and 4, and 11am to 6pm on December 9, 10 and 11.

# Come all ye faithful to the cathedral carols

## What better way to celebrate the birth of the traditions of the Christmas season than in one of our majestic cathedrals?

**CROWDS:** There is always big demand to attend one of the carol concerts at both Canterbury and Rochester cathedrals

WHAT better way to start your celebrations then listening to some perfectly-tuned Christmas carols? Kent's cathedrals are hosting their annual carol concerts again this year, with celebratory singing displays from the cathedrals' resident choirs.

Rochester Cathedral's famous choir will be staging its annual Christmas concert on December 6 – performing part one of Handel's Messiah, followed by a host of classic Christmas carols.

Canterbury Cathedral

The cathedral concert is one of the most eagerly anticipated on the calendar with tickets on sale from the cathedral priced at £15.

Meanwhile, the cathedral's long tradition of fine choral music has just received top recognition, with two of its choristers, Rupert Walker, 13, and Edward Hyde, 12, winning national success.

Both are pupils at the King's School in Rochester, where the boys' choir is educated.

Director of music at the cathedral, Scott Farrell, said: "It is a remarkable achievement for both Rupert and Edward to be chosen as finalists from thousands of applicants nationally, and for Edward to win the national title. They are both wonderful singers. I am delighted for them, and for the cathedral."

Canterbury Cathedral's magical Christmas Carol Service now takes place over two nights due to demand from families ready to embrace the festive cheer.

The first of the two identical nights takes place on December 23 and fills up the space on a first come, first serve basis.

Doors open at 6.15pm and the carol service begins at 7.30pm, finishing at 9.30pm.

Although the public used to be able to buy tickets for the second carol service (December 24), this year it's also on a first come, first serve basis, and will take place earlier in the day with doors opening at 1.45pm, and the service finishing at around 5pm.

The cathedral usually has 3,000 people in total attending the two services every year to hear the Canterbury Cathedral Choir.

There will also be an annual crib service on Christmas Eve for families and children hoping to begin the holidays in worship.

This begins in the cathedral and then moves outside to the nativity scene before the carol service at 11am.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# How can

**It's that battle you vow you'll never have – trying to put a Christmas tree which seems to have a life of its own into the car. But that's only after you've chosen it, and that's not easy, says Jo Malone.**

I remember one of the first Christmas trees my husband and I bought, feeling particularly pleased with ourselves that we'd not only remembered to measure the height of our room but to take the tape measure with us.

We'd even allowed for the height of the stand, and for the angel to sit on top.

So we had the perfect height Christmas tree, ideal for the small bay window of our terraced house.

But then we took off the net which had pinned those branches in and kept us protected from what did seem to be incredibly spiky needles, and it was far far rounder than it looked at the garden centre. It wasn't particularly tall, but it was extremely rotund. It had to sit not only in the bay window but stretching into at least half of the living room.

We spent the next three weeks squeezing our way around the thing, a shower of needles, baubles and tinsel seeming to fly in all directions if we so much as stroked it.

I think we were vacuuming its needles up for years.

The following year we went back to the small tree in a pot on the table variety.

But a lesson learnt; look at the space for a tree and consider its circumference too, small trees can have a surprisingly large girth.

While choosing at your local grower, market stall or garden centre, do make sure your tree is as healthy as possibly by testing the branches. That means holding a branch between thumb and forefinger and pulling, gently, towards yourself. If you end up with a handful of needles, you don't want this one.


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# I choose you?

It should smell good too, although some varieties do smell more than others. Give it a good sniff and see if it smells fresh.

There have been other lessons learnt too – make sure you have a way of getting the tree home and do have a stand that's big enough for the trunk.

Plus don't fill its pot with earth until it's too heavy to move and your tree spends its Christmas looking beautiful – outside where you filled the pot.

We've only used a stand once, but a top tip was to ensure that the trunk of the tree will fit in it, and that it's big enough to keep the tree upright. You don't want to have to trim bark to fit the stand as that's the layer needed for the tree to absorb water.

Plus, if it's a cut stem rather than a rooted tree, take off another inch when you get it home before it goes in the stand to ensure it can take up water.

Put it in the stand before you take the net off and accept that it is going to need water throughout the festive season. Do work out a way of topping it up without tipping a litre of water over the presents arranged around the base – yes, another lesson learnt.

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# Keeping our heritage safe on both wet and dry land

## A scheme is to be rolled out to protect historic sites while regulations are to be tightened over shipwrecks off our coast

**By Adele Couchman**
adele.couchman@archant.co.uk

KEnt is to benefit from a new 'Heritage Watch' scheme from next year, police chiefs have revealed.

The scheme, which aims to preserve the 20,000 protected sites and buildings across the county, will bring together a number of agencies to protect Kent's heritage from crime.

Building on the success of other watch schemes in the country, it aims to fight crime and anti-social behaviour by improving communication between people who live near the sites, community groups and the police.

Already well established in Essex, Cheshire and Hertfordshire, Heritage Watch is expected to launch in Kent as early in spring 2017.

National policing and crime advisor for Historic England, the government body tasked with protecting historic sites, Mark Harrison said: "Owners and managers of heritage sites and general agencies including Kent Police, the Maritime and Coastguard Agency and the National Trust will come together to protect Kent's heritage for future generations.

**WRECKS:** In addition to our land-based sites, a conference recently took place at Leeds Castle over shipwrecks

"Kent has a big population, its close to Europe, and there are lots of issues here that do not exist in other parts of the country.

"It's crucial we recruit a number of eyes and ears that protect the many historic sites around this area."

Kent's maritime heritage is also set to benefit as efforts are stepped up protect historic shipwrecks dotted across the UK.

The first of its kind in England, a maritime theft workshop was hosted by Historic England at Leeds Castle at the end of last month. Bringing together the police, coastguard, diving communities and universities, agencies worked closely together to draft a strategy combating criminals stealing from protected wreck sites.

Many shipwrecks are protected for their historical importance or because they are considered dangerous, with divers required to obtain a licence under the Protection of Wrecks Act 1973.

Of all of 52 protected shipwrecks in England, 15 remain off the coast of Kent and Sussex – with the potentially explosive SS Richard Montgomery off Sheerness also protected under the same legislation.

Mr Harrison, who used to work for Kent Police and spearheaded a partnership to tackle heritage crime across England, says although criminals are a tiny minority, their damage can be irreversible.

He explained: "Even though thefts from shipwrecks are fortunately rare, the problem is big because once these things are gone they go forever.

"It's not just an individual someone is stealing from, it's a theft from society. But with this strategy we will try to get such crimes down to zero."

He added: "If we were to pull the plug on the English Channel, it would look like a scrapyard with wrecks of all different shapes, sizes and materials. And there are thousands we don't even know about yet."

In recent years Kent Police have taken part in three successful prosecutions involving shipwreck crime.

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# Beatrix Potter's festive castle

**FAVOURITES:** Peter Rabbit will be one of the many characters on display at Leeds Castle

**Pictures: By Andy Archer**

Words: Chris Britcher

THE world of Beatrix Potter arrived at Leeds Castle this week, bringing a taste of the magic of the books to the county.

From this Saturday until January 2, the castle has partnered with the owners of the Beatrix Potter brand to celebrate the final month of the 150th anniversary year of the children's author.

Her best known characters include the likes of Peter Rabbit, Mrs Tiggy-Winkle, Jemima Puddle-Duck and Squirrel Nutkin.

The castle has set up everything from scenes from the books recreated both in miniature and life-size, as well as a selection of diaries and sketch books used by the author to craft her tales.

Alysha Sargent, head of engagement and events at Leeds Castle, said: "So many people have grown up with Beatrix Potter and hold her close to their hearts. We are especially looking forward to watching parents and grandparents sharing their childhood memories with their own children and grandchildren on this nostalgic trip down memory lane."

To celebrate the launch of A Tale of Christmas, pupils from Leeds and Broomfield Primary School were treated to a fireside reading by a woman dressed as the author.

**SIZES:** There's big and small alike to entertain the crowds expected

**THRILLED:** Children hear from the actress performing as the author


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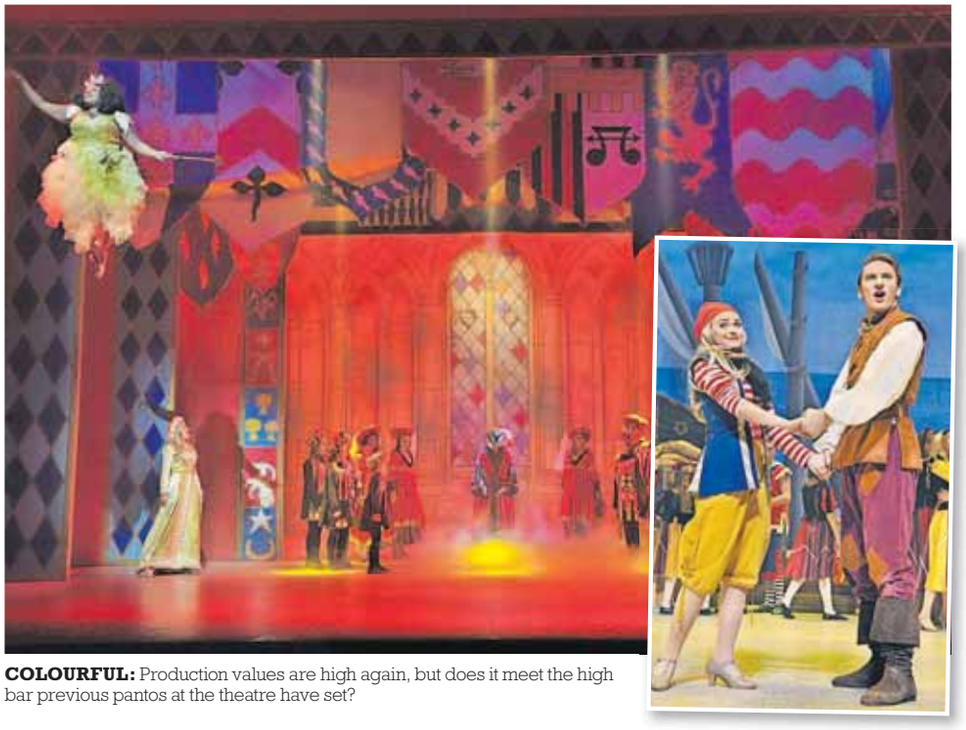
# Can Marlowe retain its crown as king of the panto?

Traditionally it's one of the very best pantos in the south east. We take our place in the audience and cast a critical eye over Canterbury's Dick Whittington



**COLOURFUL:** Production values are high again, but does it meet the high bar previous pantos at the theatre have set?

**Review: By Chris Britcher**
chris.britcher@archant.co.uk

TO AN extent, the Marlowe Theatre's pantomime is a victim of its own success.

So glorious have been past productions, that even the slightest dip in form is apparent to a demanding audience who, more often than not, have come back again and again for their annual festive treat.

The production powerhouse duo of husband and wife Paul Hendy and Emily Wood know what makes good entertainment, know the balance to strike, and seek to deliver a quality to the performances which so many others forget to include.

Thus the choreography is always tight, the music numbers impressive and some of the staging simply breathtaking.

All of which means that this year's production of Dick Whittington has been eagerly anticipated.

The big question is do they deliver once again? And the answer is both yes and no. Yes, in as much as it is another sumptuous feast of entertainment, with some set pieces bordering on the finest available.

There is a gloriously satisfying spectacular slapstick scene in which gymnast Vladimir Georgievsky (who plays Alderman Fitzwarren) puts in a performance which had everyone gasping and laughing in equal measure.

It was the sort of scene any fan of that golden era of slapstick – from the likes of Laurel and Hardy and the Marx Brothers – would appreciate and reminds us of the sheer enjoyment of a performer doing what he does best.

A 3D scene – glasses are provided – works brilliantly and has young and old alike squealing with delight – once again reminding us that 3D continues to work as a visually stimulating treat in any environment when the experience of the audience and it's ability to intrude in their space, is put as its very raison d'etre.

Stephen Mulhern (Billy) – returning to the theatre after a gap of a few years where previously he was in a supporting role – is now the lead man and it's hard to do anything but warm to him. He's charismatic and disarming and some of his illusions will have you mesmerised. Lisa Davina Phillip (Fairy Bow-Bells) is worthy

**STARS:** Above, Stephen Mulhern, second right, is the main man but it's Ben Roddy as the dame, right, who is the star

of praise for her high-flying role too.

And, of course, it's hard to fault Ben Roddy (Dolly the Cook) as the panto-mime dame. He was, as ever, the undisputed star of the show and almost worth the price of admission alone. In truth, the whole cast did a good job.

No, in that there is something a little more forced about it this year, which makes it a less satisfying experience than before. It's still a great show – and despite the gripes it never veers from being good value for money – but given the high bar they have set themselves, Dick Whittington just seems to fall a little short.

Some of the set pieces don't work quite as smoothly as before. The messy scene in the ship's galley is set so deep in the stage it is almost so far from the audience it loses something as a consequence, while another remarkable illusion from Mulhern sees his thunder completely stolen by Roddy's appearance (I won't spoil the scene but you'll know it when you see it) which instantly makes you forget the trick you were just engrossed in.

There's a visually beautiful scene between the straight roles of Dick Whittington (Ben Carruthers) and Alice Fitzwarren (Jemma Carlisle) but it is slightly too long and loses much of the young audience in the process, slowing down the pace and thrust of the story and filling the arena with chatter.

And, in truth, the first half is a little light on punch. There's the 'signs' gag

which has worked well before, but didn't quite hit the same heights again. And we have to wait for the second half to see where some of the big money spent on the production went.

There is also a nagging temptation which suggests this year's production has not had quite the finances available to it.

As good as Mulhern is, it's somewhat questionable if he has the pulling power needed to lure some to join the fun. And unlike previous years, he is the one and only wider personality on the bill. It is indeed highly fortunate the Marlowe has the home grown talents of Roddy and Lloyd Hollett (Captain Crabstick) as a powerful supporting cast. The only issue is that if you haven't seen a Marlowe panto before, will their names – with the best will in the world – pull in more punters? I fear probably not (and that despite the fact you would struggle to buy in a 'name' capable of being as good as they, but from a purely marketing point of view, you get my point).

I doubt anyone missed another soap opera star appearing to pocket the pay cheque, but it did seem a little light on star quality compared with previous years.

Even the arrival of the ghost bench and the annual routine around it didn't seem to trigger the same delight as it has in years gone by.

And don't get me started on the rather uncomfortable 'why Britain is great' routine at the end which ends up being all a little too self reverential and in a year of Brexit getting perilously close to being a tad political.

But perhaps the biggest stumbling block is simply the story. Dick Whittington is an odd one in many respects (the motives and push behind the characters is never really explained so it's never entirely clear why they're doing what they're doing) but perhaps I'm simply overthinking it – it is panto after all.

Dick Whittington is a great show. It is hugely entertaining, visually arresting and full of great song and dance numbers. The main characters are all strong but... there is, as our French cousins say, a little je nais sais quoi, which just stops it from building on some of the sublime shows of years gone by.

Evolution Productions – the Hendy/Wood company behind it – are, as this review started by stating, a top quality deliverer of superb shows. This is no different but given the high standards set before, it would be wrong, surely, not to hope for more of the same.

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# 1890 carriage renovation is back on track

**By Adele Couchman**
adele.couchman@archant.co.uk

A CAMPAIGNER who has worked tirelessly to restore a Victorian lift which once carried passengers from Folkestone seafront up a steep cliff on to the town's popular The Leas, has pumped £9,000 of his own money into a second round of work.

Robert Mouland wants to see the carriage returned to its former glory as a permanent reminder of what was once a hugely popular attraction.

First opened in 1890, it was one of a pair of stepped lift carriages – which means the seats within were on different levels in order to climb the steep slope – which operated on the now disused lines alongside the Leas Lift, an 1885 cable car on tracks which still escorts passengers up to the town centre today.

The track and carriages were decommissioned in 1966 and have had an unusual history ever since.

Most recently, in August, works began on one of the carriages after the previous restoration job used the wrong timber – causing the step lift to decay.

Mr Mouland, who was involved in the original work, has provided £9,000 from his own pocket for the project.

He explained; "I couldn't accept such a beautiful exhibit of 126 years that served people throughout the Victorian era to be gotten rid of. Everyone should have a right to that heritage."

The 1890 carriage was first restored back in 2010 by the 1890 Leas Lift Carriage Restoration Appeal.

He explained: "We first began working on the carriage in 2009, where £37,500 was raised.

"A community grant came from Shepway District Council of £4,500; plus £2,200 from Kent county councillor Roland Tolputt."

But after work finished that year, the carriage then spent three years in a car park in the Grand Hotel in Folkestone. As Mr Mouland put it: "No one wanted to find it a home."

**LIFT:** Insets, work continues on carriage - lifted in main image back in 2003

In 2013, however, the step lift was finally moved to the Elham Valley Railway Museum in Newington where it remains today.

Dover mayor Neil Rix has helped Mr Mouland with his appeal to restore the historic carriage by providing scaffolding for the work.

And although Mr Mouland did not approach either Shepway council or Folkestone Town Council for funding on this occasion, he felt both should have been alert to the work and contributed.

He added: "One should not have to ask the district council or town council for funding as this carriage is part of Folkestone's heritage. It ought to be given automatically - but it wasn't."

A statement from Shepway District Council said: "When we were approached we were happy to contribute to the initial, and major, refurbishment of the stepped carriage and one of our councillors was also involved with the appeal.

"However, we are not aware of any approach to make a contribution to the second appeal fund set up for the project and indeed had no knowledge that was a need for further funding."

Dover town councillor Graham Wanstall said Mr Mouland should be proud of his efforts, however.

He said: "It is quite refreshing Mr Mouland has put his time and money where his mouth is. Future generations will thank such people who worked hard to preserve parts of our heritage, whilst others spend time destroying it."

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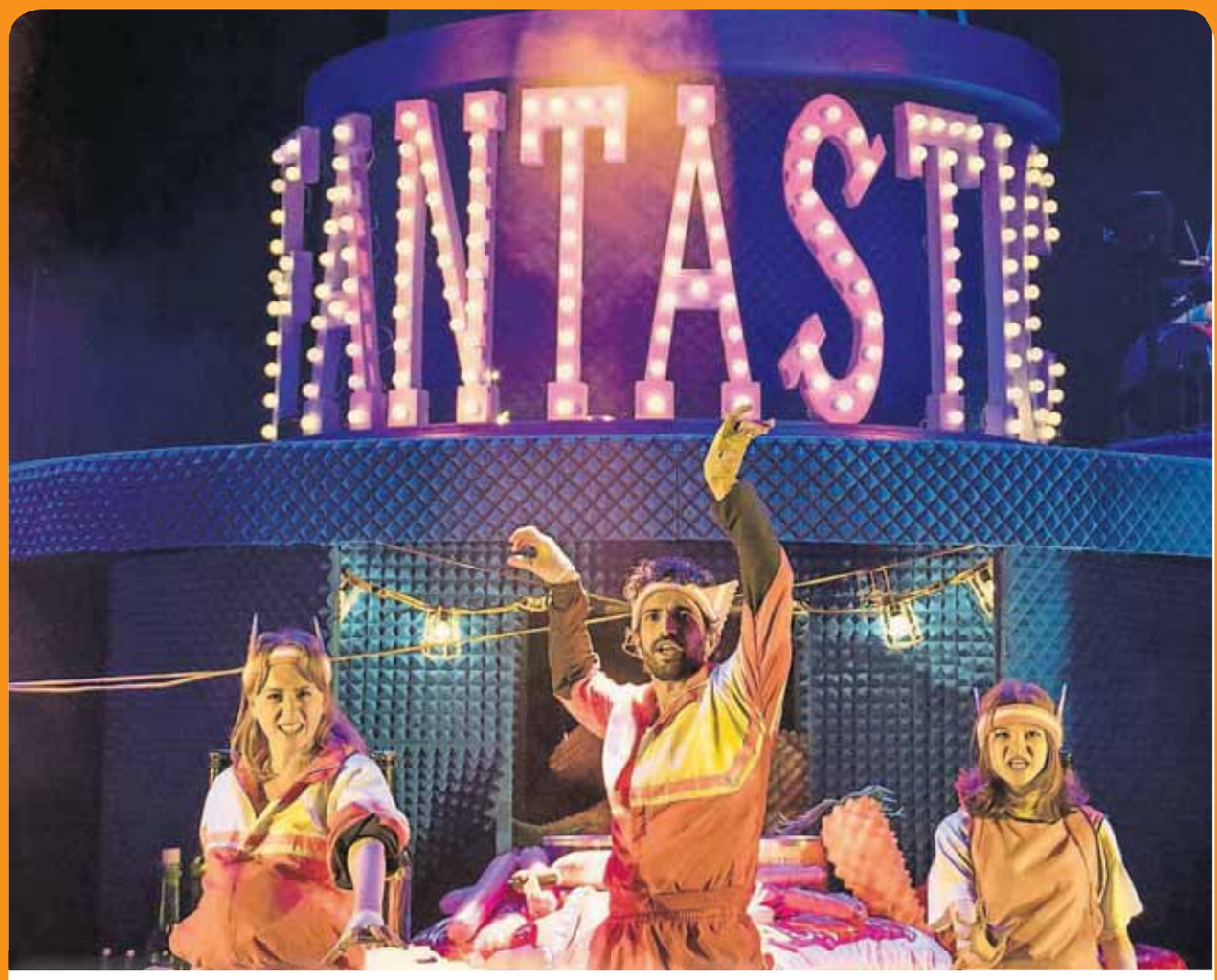


**CELEBRATION:** The cast is yet to be announced but the story is a firm favourite among Roald Dahl fans of all ages

# Fantastic Mr Fox adaptation marks 100 years of Dahl

## Stage adaptor Sam Holcroft sheds lights on transforming the story for stage...

THIS new musical adaptation of Fantastic Mr Fox is a flagship production for the Roald Dahl 100 celebrations marking his centenary year, and it's making its way to Dartford.

Published in 1970, the story delivers family fun at its finest and remains a firm favourite among Roald Dahl fans of all ages.

The story of Fantastic Mr Fox and his heroic adventures became a global sensation following the popular success of Wes Anderson's Oscar-nominated movie version (released in 2009), which starred George Clooney in the title role.

When KoS spoke to stage adaptor, Sam Holcroft about his favourite parts of the musical, he said: "The story has really high stakes for Mr Fox. I love that Mr Fox is pushed to the limit of his abilities and must find ingenious ways to outsmart the horrible farmers."

Mr Holcroft knew themes in the book were really important and had to tread carefully when adapting them for the stage.

"In the book, Roald Dahl explores the theme of sharing with others versus being greedy. The farmers are greedy while Mr Fox shares generously with his friends and family," informs the script writer.

"I was careful to include these themes in the script, too. In fact the whole play centres around Mr Fox and his friends, and how their willingness to share and work together saves the day."

With Roald Dahl's phenomenal stories and writing, it must be difficult not to copy his work word for word when writing the script.

Mr Holcroft says: "It was very daunting, but you can only do your best, and I tried very hard to capture the spirit of the book, rather than copying word for word. By 'spirit' I mean that I tried to recreate how the book made me feel: I felt love for Mr Fox and his friends, I was afraid by his race for survival, and I delighted that he succeeded with his friends, at the end, while the farmers suffered in the rain because of their obsessive greed."

Luke Kelly, managing director of the Roald Dahl Literary Estate and Roald Dahl's grandson, says: "We're excited to be working with such an accomplished partner as Nuffield Theatre to bring Fantastic Mr Fox to the stage in this brand new musical version, and delighted that so many people across the UK will be able to see it during the 2017 tour."

This new commission by Nuffield and Curve in association with Lyric Hammersmith brings together a creative team consisting of playwright Sam Holcroft, director Maria Aberg, designer Tom Scutt, composer Arthur Darvill, lyricists Darren Clark, Arthur Darvill, Sam Holcroft and Al Muriel, sound designer Claire Windsor, lighting designer Lee Curran, casting director Annelie Powell and movement director Ayse Tashkiran. Casting is yet to be announced.

Sam Hodges, director at Nuffield Southampton Theatres, says: "This co-production marks significant growth for Nuffield. I'm delighted to be able to announce our second London transfer in as many years and an ambitious national and international tour."

The production will be coming to the Orchard Theatre from February 28 to March 5.

For tickets, visit orchardtheatre.co.uk

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# X Factor sensation Olly Murs announces outdoor concerts

**By Emily King**

emily.king@archant.co.uk

**SUCCESSFUL:** Mr Murs is one of only a handful of X Factor stars who are succeeding in a singing career

FOLLOWING on from his spring arena tour, Olly Murs, one of British music's biggest stars, has announced his biggest headline shows yet; 20 outdoor dates across the UK, one of which will be in Canterbury.

Mr Murs said: "I am thrilled to play at The Spitfire Ground in Kent. Outdoor shows are so much fun and I am looking forward to performing my biggest songs on my biggest outdoor tour!"

2016 has been a big year for Mr Murs and has seen him celebrate his fourth successive No1 album 24 HRS, becoming the most successful solo artist ever to come from the X Factor.

Before his huge summer tour, the spring of 2017 will see Mr Murs play 23 UK shows and the opening night of the Teenage Cancer Trust show.

Since Mr Murs shot to fame in 2009, he has recorded four multi-platinum albums, produced four number one singles with total record sales exceeding 10 million.

24 HRS is the follow up to the acclaimed million selling album Never Been Better.

This won't be the first time Mr Murs has performed in Kent.

Back in 2012 he was the headline performer at Birchington's Quex Park for the Sound Island Festival alongside Rizzle Kicks, Diana Vickers, A*M*E, Jessica Wright, Cover Drive and Tich.

The singer has also been among the big names such as Jessie J, Tom Daley and Tulisa to sign books at Bluewater. Again in 2012, Mr Murs delighted hundreds of fans when he signed copies of his Happy Days book in the shopping centre.

LHG Live are proud to announce that The Spitfire Ground, St Lawrence, Canterbury, home of Kent Cricket, Kent, will welcome Olly Murs on July 7.

Promoter Liz Doogan-Hobbs MBE, CEO of LHG Live, said: "We are delighted to be working with Olly Murs on his UK Summer Tour. Olly is one of the best male solo artists in the UK and the perfect artist for our venues. We expect each show to have a great party atmosphere and look forward to hearing his most popular hits."

Tickets went on sale from December 2.

For information on tickets, visit www.ticketmaster.co.uk

## Ruby Tuesdays at Guildhall

TENTERDEN choir The Ruby Tuesdays have been invited to sing at a charity concert in London.

They will perform at the Wintersong concert on December 12 at the Guildhall.

## Turning Pages launched

TURNER Contemporary in Margate has launched a special edition exhibition, Turning Pages, by Michael Craig-Martin in celebration of the gallery's only permanent artwork.

All proceeds from sales of this print will support further exhibitions and learning programmes.

## New home for market

GRAVESEND'S Christmas Market will be in its new home this year, as the new market hall is open from December 3.

The event will mark the grand re-opening of the Gravesend Borough Market.

## Music Hub open evening

THE Music Hub Plus at Ashford Kent College held a media evening to raise awareness and invite local businesses and organisations to support the work it is doing with young people.

The hub wants to raise funds to help with its training programmes.

For details, email info@musichubkent.co.uk


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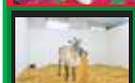


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## The Eulogy of Toby Peach

TOBY Peach is bringing his show to Canterbury's Marlowe Theatre on December 4.

The show tells the story of his Hodgkin's Lymphoma survival.

For tickets visit marlowetheatre.co.uk

## Winter Walk with ellenor

GRAVESEND charity ellenor is hosting a Winter Walk this festive season, following a successful Christmas Market.

The walk is on December 11 at Shorne Woods Country Park.

Visit www.ellenor.org/events for more information.

## Comedian Calman's show

IT'S Susan Calman's tenth year in comedy and she's back with a brand new show, which she's bringing to Margate's Theatre Royal on June 23 2017.

For tickets, visit theatreroyal-margate.com

## Milton Jones tour dates

FOLLOWING on from a hugely successful 2015 tour, Milton Jones is coming to Tunbridge Wells' Assembly Hall on October 8, 2017 and Canterbury's Marlowe Theatre on November 12, 2017.

Tickets for Milton Jones is Out There are available through venue box offices: assemblyhalltheatre.co.uk and marlowetheatre.com

# Port of Dover's first White Cliffs Christmas

**By Emiy King**

emily.king@archant.co.uk

THE Port of Dover's historic Cruise Terminal One has officially opened its first ever White Cliffs Christmas.

Boasting an ice-rink, the venue also features a Christmas Market, Cockles and Co Bar, Sugar and Spice Sweet Shop as well as a range of vintage vehicles from the Dover Transport Museum, and a host of festive food and drink concessions.

Father Christmas will be on his sleigh guided by real reindeers and friendly elves at White Cliffs Christmas until December 23 to entertain and excite kids before the day they're all waiting for.

"What a fantastic way to start the countdown to Christmas. The White Cliffs Christmas event is a first for the Port of Dover and judging by the enthusiasm of the crowds, it will certainly not be the last," said Cruise Terminal One chief executive Tim Waggott.

"Our White Cliffs Christmas is about bringing friends and family, our community, together. It is also about showing just what a fantastic destination Dover can be when you have a shared vision. By utilising one of the Port's celebrated assets, and at such a special time of year, we are seeing a fantastic union of port and town and are attracting visitors from further afield too. I would like to thank all of those who have helped to make this a truly special event for Dover."

Dover and Deal MP Charlie Elphicke said: "It was great to go along to the fabulous White Cliffs Christmas at the Old Marine Station. It was so good to see families having fun at the ice rink. And the Cockles & Co bar was a delight.

"Well done to the Port of Dover and everyone involved in putting on such an excellent event."

The White Cliffs Christmas is open daily from 4pm until 10pm weekdays, and 10am until 9pm on weekends at Cruise Terminal One until January 2. To book ice skating or Father Christmas, visit www.whitecliffschristmas.co.uk

**HISTORIC:** Port of Dover

**SUPPORTIVE:** Dover and Deal MP Charlie Elphicke attended

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# 'I'll leave food campaigning to others' says Stein

## Rick Stein talks about his new book, life in Padstow, and leaving campaigning to Jamie Oliver...

RICK Stein's latest foodie mission, Long Weekends, is all about enjoying life's simpler pleasures.

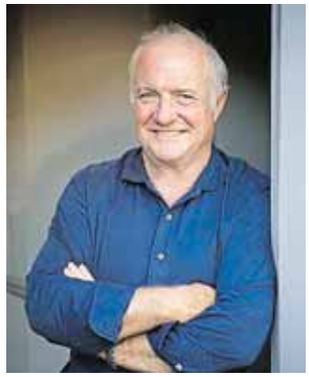
"It's what we do really," quips the 69-year-old seafood maestro, who over the years has cooked for a host of famous faces, including the Queen.

"I'll leave campaigning cookery to other people – people like Jamie Oliver and Hugh Fearnley-Whittingstall who do a fabulous job. For me, it's about saying, 'Hey! We're alive', and what's the best part of being alive? Eating and drinking... apart from the obvious," he adds with a chuckle, "so let's enjoy it while we can!"

For those who haven't caught Stein's BBC Two food-travelogue series, picture a colourful culinary adventure that follows the chef as he embarks on a string of European weekends, in search of good food, wine and traditional recipes.

For a man who has now written more than 20 bestselling cookbooks, and incurs coos of 'I love him!' at the mere mention of his name, the decision to pen a tie-in book for this latest series was a "no-brainer".

There are sections dedicated to Friday night suppers, substantial Saturday brunches and Sunday dinners, and the tome is intended to inspire in two ways – as a travel guide for the destinations visited while compiling the recipes, and as a go-to guide for those keen to cook for family and friends at home.



**SIMPLER:** His book delves into life's simple pleasures

"If you're cooking for your family during the week, you tend to stick to things you know because you haven't got time. But at the weekends, you might well try something - and this is what this book is all about, really."

And the Oxford-born restaurateur certainly knows a thing or two about rousing enthusiasm in the kitchen, after decades of small-screen appearances on the subject, and having built an empire that includes six acclaimed Cornish restaurants, a seafood cookery school, delicatessen, patisserie, fishmongers, gift ship, pub and cocktail bar.

As a result, Padstow (where he lives now) residents once dubbed their area 'Padstein', but in recent years, Stein has also expanded, and now has restaurants in Winchester, Poole's Sandbanks, Marlborough – and the sunnier climes of Mollymook, Australia.

"People say, 'It's crazy, your life', but it's not really," he says, after detailing how he splits his time between Chiswick (where he now lives most of the time), Padstow (where he still spends lots of time) and Australia (where he visits three times a year – and also where he first met his second wife, Sarah).

"I like travel, I don't find it stressful."

As for plans to open more eateries, he's not sold on the idea of a chain but doesn't plan on retirement yet.

"If I want to retire, I will, but I don't think I will," Stein reasons.

## Bowie's birthday bash

THE late British rock icon David Bowie would have celebrated his 70th birthday on January 8, 2017.

To celebrate the life of the music legend, there will be a concert at his old school, Ravens Wood School in Bromley.

Tickets are £10 for adults, and £5 for seniors and under 16s.

For tickets, visit www.ticketsource.co.uk/bowiebromleybirthdaybash

## Davidson's stage show

JIM Davidson OBE, is currently celebrating four decades in show business with a brand new stage play, 40 Years On, which he is bringing to Dartford's Orchard Theatre on February 3, 2017.

Written and developed by Mr Davidson, the show is a heartfelt and hilarious autobiographical reflection on his legendary career.

Tickets are on sale now, to book visit orchardtheatre.co.uk

## The Full Monty cast

THE 2016/17 UK Tour of Simon Beaufoy's The Full Monty, which won the UK Theatre Award for Best Touring Production, will make its way to Dartford's Orchard Theatre from February 13 to 18 2017.

The cast will be led by Gary Lucy (Danny Pennant in EastEnders).

To book tickets, visit orchardtheatre.co.uk or call the ticket office on 01322 220000.

## Waltzer's unveiling

DREAMLAND Margate has announced its new ride at the amusement park, the Waltzer.

The Waltzer is a 10-car ride from the late 1960s and guests will be able to enjoy the ride at this year's Christmas event, The Frosted Fairground at weekends and holidays from December 3.

The cars can hold up to 40 people at a time.

For tickets, visit www.dreamland.co.uk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## Article 50 needs triggering now

I AM willing to bet that most thought leaving the EU would be a matter of stopping membership subscriptions and taking back control of our own sovereignty, budgets, laws, trade deals, borders and seas.

And so it should be. But we find out that politicians and others are complicating and delaying the process by introducing debates on 'leaving the EU', 'leaving the single market', 'leaving the European Court', and 'leaving the EU customs authority'.

One plain fact is remaining part of any of the above four means you have not left the EU, which was the referendum question. We are restricted in trading with the rest of the world while we are part of the EU.

Much debate is centred on Article 50 which itself was not given "a lot of thought or finalised" as Europe did not realise or allow for the possibility of a country actually wanting to leave. Europe's past record is that if they didn't get the vote outcome they wanted the first time – they would arrange further votes until they did (eg Ireland).

Beware of non-elected bureaucrats and yesterday's politicians and EU encouragement of them. Theresa May should indicate immediately a deadline to stop paying membership subscription and consider ourselves Brexited. If Europe are our friends and allies they will accept this – however if they don't there seems no reason to continue with Nato where our boys will be expected to die for their freedom – again.

**Edward La Coste,**
Lamberhurst

## Why is it wrong for white voices?

IS IT really so terrible that working class white people in Britain and the US have spoken up against globalisation and expressed how they feel excluded by a political system that seem to benefit mainly the privileged liberal elite?

For a long time ethnic minorities have quite rightly been given a platform from which to loudly voice their concerns, so surely the same courtesy should be afforded to an indigenous majority who for no fault of their own happen to be white.

**Clive Wilkins-Oppler,**
Petham

## Blair, Major – keep out of it now

TERRY Smith [KoS, letters last week], his attack on Nigel Farage, speaks of 'carnage', caused by the Brexit vote.

This is total rubbish, as we now have a much brighter future in prospect, abandoning a dysfunctional and declining EU, in order to return to the path we should never have left, of being a global, democratic and independent nation.

Unless Mr Smith is one of that small group of politicians and bureaucrats riding the EU gravy train I can only assume that he, and those who share his benign view of the EU, are suffering from sort of political Stockholm Syndrome, having been brainwashed into believing that living under a bureaucratic dictatorship is preferable to being a citizen of a free country.

The arrogance of yesterday's men, Tony Blair and John Major, is breathtaking. Having presided over the UK's disastrous involvement in the European project they are still trying to ignore the clear decision expressed in the result of the referendum. If ever proof was needed of the undemocratic and elitist nature of the political establishment then the intervention by these dinosaurs provides it.

**Colin Bullen,**
Tonbridge

## LETTER OF THE WEEK

## Scandal of bad blood needs full exposure

I WAS very moved by your weekend coverage for World Aids Day and the devastating effect it had on haemophiliacs ['I got HIV from NHS', KoS, cover story last week] and by the remarkable story of Lee Stay and his tenacity.

Listening to the contaminated blood scandal described in the Commons last week as "a collective shame" and a "stain on our country" would be little comfort for the years of suffering, hopes, dreams and ambitions ruined by private companies putting profit before patient safety.

As has been reported in recent editions of KoS, the warnings of contaminated blood products imported from USA were well known in the 1970s and that UK was very slow to implement heat treatment to counter HIV contaminated products.

Despite well documented evidence to the contrary, health ministers (Nicola Blackwood being the latest in a long line) continue the falsehood that UK was quick to react to the emerging treatment disaster and that an inquiry would serve no useful purpose.

Lord Owen (a former health minister himself at the time of the scandal), speaking of the deliberate destruction of his ministerial papers, would argue otherwise.

That campaigning journalism is still at the forefront of bringing this appalling saga out of the shadows, is a testament to KoS' commitment to right wrongs visited on local people and a terrible indictment of Whitehall's concerted on going cover up and lies.

**Steve Dymond**
Broadstairs

## Voted leave? You were sold a pup

WHY doesn't this spineless government and its MPs state that Article 50 will not be triggered, in the interest of Britain and it's long term future?

In your article on how our MPs will vote [KoS, 20.11], Roger Gale stated 50 per cent of the electorate voted to leave. No they didn't – the figure was 37 per cent. This is about 26 per cent of the population of the UK. No way can this figure be described as, the country voted to leave.

As much as the Brexiters hate it, the referendum was advisory only.

How many of the 37 per cent were swayed by the lying red bus? How much was coming back to the NHS per week? How many Turks were waiting to enter the UK if they were to become EU members? How many of the 37 per cent managed to formulate a personal opinion of the pros and cons of EU membership?

How many took the easy option and were swayed by the bigotry and Little Englander mentality of the right wing press this country suffers?

Do they think the triggering of Article 50 will transport us to some type of nirvana? 'We want our country back' – fatuous, meaningless nonsense, most of our utility companies are run or owned by European companies, as is much of the UK. Thatcher sold it years ago,remember?

Another misnomer, 'they are taking our jobs', what ones would that be? Field work, fruit picking, hospital cleaners, chambermaids?

The time, energy and monies wasted on this lunacy will be staggering. The government needs to govern, not lead us lemming like over the cliff, they know they have the option not to trigger Article 50.

The government's energies would be better spent dealing with their monumental failings in the UK, nothing to do with the EU. Prison service in crisis; elderly care in the community failing miserably. Along with the sale of public housing, leading to the crisis the rental markets are in today.

The NHS, always under attack by backdoor privatisation; councils struggling to provide local services. Why? Because of grant reduction. Why? Because the tax take is down, Why? Low wages, part time working, zero hour contracts.

Prime minister May on the side of the working man? She's a Tory. History tells us this is fantasy.

The trade union movement was born out of the desperation of the working classes, not out of the benevolence of the Tory and Whig parties of the day.

Don't worry about the EU, the threat to the UK is from ourselves and the repeated election of Tory governments, brought about by the indolence of the average voter.

If you voted for Brexit you were conned, sold a pup. Time to wise up.

**R Redding**
Strood

## KOS 10 GUIDING PRINCIPLES

AS part of our commitment to providing the best service to you, we have produced our 10 guiding principles

**Kent on Sunday will:**

1) Be available in every postcode in Kent.
2) Be fair, accurate and balanced.
3) Be written in clear, concise English.
4) Not be overly sensational.
5) Have a sense of humour.
6) Have an easily understood division between news, comment and advertising.
7) Seek to celebrate as well as constructively criticise.
8) Highlight topical issues of concern to people living in the county.
9) Spotlight individual cases which raise broader concerns.
10) Champion causes that it feels are important to the well-being of the county and its people.

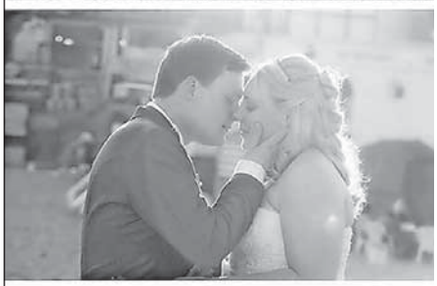
**We hope you enjoy Kent on Sunday.**

# images of kent

## Marlowe Theatre at Canterbury

by **Alan Blackburn, from Canterbury**

To see your photograph printed, email **editorial@kosmedia.co.uk**,. Be sure to include your name, address and a contact telephone number. Unfortunately we cannot return any prints, and please do not send negatives.



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# holidays

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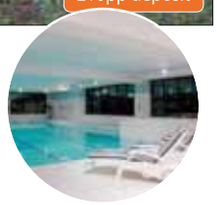
and information

## Carry on New Year 60s Party in Leicestershire

### Bosworth Hall Hotel - Self-Drive

27 January, 2017 • Quote: BO1-KOS



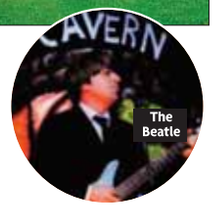
**EXTEND your New Year celebrations at Bosworth Hall Hotel, in the village of Market Bosworth near Leicester. Our popular private party weekend has become a must-do annual event with guests returning year after year. There will be super entertainment from 60s band Union Gap and Roy Carter (ex-Drifters & Foundations). Add to this 2-for-1 drinks both nights and this is one party that's set to rock.**

**INCLUDED:** 2 drinks for the price of 1 from 7pm to 11pm both nights • 2 nights sharing an en-suite twin or double bedroom • 2 dinners & 2 breakfasts • Live entertainment both nights plus GN Host on site • Free use of leisure facilities (indoor pool & gym) • Free parking

## 60s Sounds in Surrey

### Thatcher's Hotel, Guildford

10 February, 2017 - Quote: TG2-KOS




**ENJOY a fun-packed party break at this charming Tudor-style hotel near Guildford and close to The Hogs Back Brewery and Polesden Lacey, an Edwardian country house and estate. All bedrooms are en-suite and dinners & breakfasts are included. Entertainment is provided by The Beatle tribute & comedy singer Ian Larkin.**

**INCLUDED:** Entertainment both nights • 2 dinners and 2 breakfasts • 2 nights sharing an en-suite bedroom with TV, tea/coffee tray and free wifi • Free parking

## Carry on New Year Dance Party

### Warner Bembridge, Isle of Wight

6 January, 2017 • Quote: NY1-3-KOS

**FANS of Strictly Come Dancing and dance enthusiasts are in for a treat at our exclusive break on the Isle of Wight. We are taking over Warner's Bembridge Coast Hotel again with a tailor made weekend hosted by IDU World Ballroom Dance Champions Warren and Kristi Boyce, featuring Ballroom and Latin dance tuition, dance cabaret, social dancing, a Gala Ball and much more. With a huge 8,860 sq ft dance floor, reserved tables and seating for a maximum of 200 dance guests, comfort and space are guaranteed. Dance guests can also enjoy a packed entertainment programme in the show lounge with tributes to The Beatles, The Stylistics and Tom Jones, PLUS great food and free drinks from 6pm to midnight every night.**

**INCLUDED:** Free drinks from 6pm to midnight every night - house beers and spirits, wine by the glass, pumped soft drinks and pumped mixers • 3 nights sharing an en-suite chalet with TV and tea/coffee tray - main hotel upgrades available • 3 dinners and 3 breakfasts • Dance tuition • Dance cabaret • Social dancing • Gala Ball • 60s-themed entertainment in the show lounge • Return car ferry • Free car parking

## Amsterdam to Rotterdam New Year Party Cruise

### By Rail from Ebbsfleet

29 December, 2016 • Quote: NY12-KOS

**CELEBRATE the New Year in style on board the 4-star MS Johannes Brahms river cruiser. Starting in Amsterdam we have plenty of time to enjoy the Dutch capital before sailing past Kinderdijk, which has 19 windmills in a stunning landscape straight from a Rembrandt painting. We continue to Rotterdam, where we count down to 2017 with a New Year party and a spectacular fireworks display over the city's Erasmus Bridge.**

**INCLUDED:** Escorted return Eurostar travel from Ebbsfleet (Ebbsfleet parking from just £21 for 4 days) • 4-night full board plus cruise sharing a twin-bed rear cabin on Main Deck - upgrades available • Beer, wine and soft drinks served at lunch, dinner and from 6pm to midnight at the bar • Entertainment • Transfers abroad • Services of our Cruise Director on board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By Steve Loader
editorial@kosmedia.co.uk

**STUNNER:** Alfa's brand new Giulia

# Giulia has that feelgood factor

**FIRST DRIVE:** Alfa fans waited a long time for a car like the new Giulia executive model and it was worth the wait...

THERE are cars that make you feel good before you even fire up the engine. The new Alfa Romeo Giulia (from £29,180) is one.

Finally, the legendary Italian car brand has a car to attack German premium rivals like the BMW 3 Series, Mercedes-Benz C-Class and Audi A4.

First, it looks stunning – hence my introduction – but even the 2.2 diesel, tested courtesy of Northgate Garage in Canterbury, sounds smooth and revs well.

On the road, your grin gets wider: the Giulia's predecessor, the 159 (2006-2011) was a brave effort, but hamstrung by an uninspiring front-wheel drive layout.

The Giulia's classic rear-driven layout - a la C-Class and 3 Series – delivers a 50:50 front/back weight distribution and sophisticated rear suspension that makes the car handle beautifully.

It feels light and responsive, and corners crisply, with a nicely flat stance, and yet the taut suspension is not uncomfortable – it can be both cruiser and sportster.

I was also impressed with the interior: some trimming quality in this class is often pared back to help pricing, only for high spec models to be let down by these underpinnings.

But Alfa got it right here, with a classy dashboard and technical interface, although the actual touchscreen is a bit meagre.

Our mid-range Super spec test car was impressive enough, but a flagship Quadrifolglio (£59,000) with Ferrari inspired 2.9-litre engine, looked stunning in the showroom.

Not surprisingly, Northgate Garage has enjoyed good demand with the Giulia, selling some in advance of the car arriving, while other customers needed just a glance at the car 'in the metal' to clinch the deal.

"We sold five cars pretty quickly, helped by pent-up demand – customers had seen pictures of the car beforehand and were simply keen to buy," said Andy Miller, the brand's sales manager at Northgate.

» Read more of Steve's motoring reviews in...
KENT LIFE

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## THE ALL-NEW ALFA ROMEO GIULIA. THE WAIT IS OVER

With 510 hp and perfect 50:50 weight distribution, the All-New Alfa Romeo Giulia Quadrifoglio combines power and performance like never before. Breath-taking Italian design, innovation and unrivalled driving pleasure are yours to experience. Engineered to thrill, the Alfa Romeo Giulia can be yours for only £59,000 OTR. **Book a test drive today.**

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TEL: 01227 208660 WWW.NORTHGATE-GROUP.CO.UK

*La meccanica delle emozioni*

Model Shown: The All-New Alfa Romeo Giulia 2.9 V6 Bi-Turbo 510 hp Quadrifoglio at £60,750 including £1750 Competizione Red. Range of official fuel consumption figures for the Alfa Giulia range: Urban 22.8 - 53.3 mpg (12.4 - 5.3 l/100km); Extra Urban 49.6 - 80.7 mpg (5.7 - 3.5 l/100km); Combined 34.4 - 67.3 mpg (8.2 - 4.2 l/100km). $CO_2$ emissions 189 - 109 g/km. Fuel consumption and $CO_2$ figures are obtained for comparative purposes in accordance with EC directives/regulations and may not be representative of real-life driving conditions.

17727

## THE ALL NEW TOYOTA C-HR. COMING SOON.

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Orbital Park, Ashford
Kent TN24 0SN
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**motorlineashford.toyota.co.uk/c-hr**

**Motorline Canterbury**
Broad Oak Road, Canterbury
Kent CT2 7RB
**Tel: 0844 822 7130**
**motorlinecanterbury.toyota.co.uk/c-hr**

**Motorline Tunbridge Wells**
Dowding Way, Tunbridge Wells
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Register your interest by visiting your local centre website above

# Can Fiat's Tipo break the sequence?

## Italian giant's luck and confidence in the medium car sector has been patchy, as regular model name changes have shown, **writes Steve Loader...**

**FIAT Tipo 1.6 Multi-Jet 120hp Lounge**

| | |
|---|---|
| Price: | from £17,995 |
| Driving appeal: | ★★★ |
| Image: | ★★★ |
| Space: | ★★★★★ |
| Value: | ★★★★★ |
| Running costs: | ★★★★★ |
| How green?: | ★★★★★ |
| Best rival: | Vauxhall Astra |

FIAT struck gold by reviving the 500 nameplate, but the Midas touch has been missing when naming its family hatchbacks.

The Italian giant's 1980s Ritmo – badged here as the Strada – was famously advertised as 'hand-built by robots'.

But both names were dumped for the Tipo replacement in the late 1980s and this capacious car went big in Brazil, but the real story was clear when the name gave way to the Bravo/Brava series (1995-2001).

Same customer verdict though, so Stilo (2002-7) arrived, only for a return to Bravo (2007-14) and now a return to type, or rather Tipo.

Can the newcomer break this terrible sequence?

Aggressive pricing from £12,995 is a good start for the five-door hatch, with generous standard kit including air con, digital radio, Bluetooth connectivity and steering wheel remote controls – a VW Golf 5-dr starts at £18,280.

Surprisingly though, you must trade up from the base level hatch to get electric windows in the back as well as the front, when all four are standard on the Station Wagon (estate) which also gains roof bars.

The 'wagon' commands a modest £1,000 premium too at a time when 'load luggers' are cool and benefiting from MPV sales running out of steam; would-be MPV buyers want more driving pleasure and don't always want to switch to bulky crossovers/SUVs.

Not that converts will miss space much on the Tipo; the newcomer is one of the roomiest in its class, offering good leg and headroom for three in the back and class-leading boot space in both formats: 440 litres for the hatch, while the cavernous wagon offers 550 litres plus a completely flat load floor with rear seats folded.

However, the classy understated design of the exterior isn't mirrored by the interior, which is simply functional and far from the funky look of FIAT's star, the 500.

But everything is well arranged and I welcome a proper handbrake rather than electric parking brake.

The dashboard touchscreen is modestly sized by the latest standards too, but mounted nice and high and will be welcome if you think the trend towards iPad size is going too far.

Two diesel and three petrol engines are offered, with some auto and dual-clutch gearbox options. Our test car was the flagship 120hp 1.6 diesel, not the smoothest diesel out there, but offering 76.3mpg (official combined) and 98g/km of CO2 emissions – tempting for tax-wise company car user choosers.

The Tipo's driving appeal is middle of the road: there's good grip and body control, and steering feedback and a pliant ride but, barring the appearance of future performance models, the Tipo is pitched as a roomy 'one size fits all' motor at a sensible price.


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You don't have to spend a lot to get a lot. The new Fiat Tipo Lounge comes with a stellar list of kit for the price with a drive so smooth you'll feel like you're cruising the Riviera. And thanks to its styling you'll frequently get high fived by Italians.

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TEL: 01227 828200 WWW.NORTHGATE-GROUP.CO.UK

**Fuel consumption figures for the new Fiat Tipo range in mpg (l/100km): Urban 30.7 (9.2) – 70.6 (4.0); Extra Urban 56.5 (5.0) – 94.2 (3.0); Combined 44.8 (6.3) – 83.1 (3.4). $CO_2$ emissions 147 – 89 g/km.** Fuel consumption and $CO_2$ figures based on standard EU tests for comparative purposes and may not reflect real driving results. Model Shown: Fiat Tipo LOUNGE 1.4 95HP *Promotion available on Fiat Tipo LOUNGE 1.4 95HP (including option of Electroclash paint at £550) registered between 1st October and 31st December 2016. Customer Deposit is £3,449. Optional Final Payment is £7,979. Contract Term is 24 months. With Fiat i-Deal PCP you may return the vehicle instead of making the final payment. It must be in good condition and if you exceed the agreed annual mileage, you will be charged 6p per mile for exceeding 10,000 miles per annum in this example. Finance subject to status. Guarantees may be required. Terms and Conditions apply. At participating dealers only. Fiat Financial Services, PO BOX 4465, Slough, SL1 0RW. We work with a number of creditors including Fiat Financial Services. Tipo EASY 1.4 has the lowest starting price (OTR) in C-segment on 2.8.16. Visit www.fiat.co.uk/amore for more info.

17466

PUBLIC NOTICE
LICENSING ACT 2003

An application has been made by MRS. THIRUCHELVY THAVAKUHANANTHAN for the premises "MILTON STORE", 1 Milton Street, Maidstone, Kent ME16 8JT on the date of 28.11.2016.

Summary of the proposed licensable activities and the proposed hours of opening: "To vary the opening hours of the Premises Licence for the Retail Sale of Intoxicating Liquor of all descriptions for consumption off the premises and to amend the layout of the plan. The opening hours for the sale of retail of alcohol are as follows: Monday - Sunday 06.00 to 02.00

Any person wishing to view details of an application may contact the Licensing Partnership on 01732 227004

Any person wishing to make representation about the application should make them in writing on or before the: 25 December 2016

Licensing Partnership, PO BOX 182, Sevenoaks, Kent TN13 1GP

licensing@sevenoaks.gov.uk
http://pa.sevenoaks.gov. uk/online-licensing

It is an offence knowingly or recklessly to make a false statement in connection with an application. The maximum fine for which a person is liable on summary of conviction for the offence is £5000.

**LICENSING ACT 2003:**

**Application for Premises Licence**

Galliford Try Building Limited, of Beeches, Cranleigh Drive, Whitfield, Dover CT16 3NW has applied to Dover District Council, White Cliffs Business Park, Dover, Kent, CT16 3PJ for the Grant of a Premises Licence under the Licensing Act 2003. A copy of the application may be inspected during normal office hours at the Dover District Council offices, address above. The licensable activities will be Supply of Alcohol from 00:00 to 24:00 hrs every day. Any representations in respect of the application should be made in writing to the Licensing Department, Dover District Council, White Cliffs Business Park, Dover, Kent, CT16 3PJ by 22nd December 2016. It is an offence knowingly or recklessly to make a false statement in connection with an application and the maximum fine for which a person is liable on summary conviction for the offence is £5000.

**Public Notice**

**Licencing Act 2003**

An application has been made by Galliford Try Building Limited of Bowles Lodge, All Saint's Road, Hawkhurst, Cranbrook, Kent TN18 4HT to the Licensing Partnership, PO BOX 182, Sevenoaks, Kent TN13 1GP for the Grant of a Premises Licence under the Licensing Act 2003. Any person wishing to view details of an application may contact the Licensing Partnership on 01732 227004. The licensable activities will be: Supply of Alcohol from 00.00 to 24.00hrs every day. The opening hours will be 00.00 to 24.00hrs every day. Any person wishing to make a representation about the application should make it in writing to: Licensing Partnership, PO BOX 182, Sevenoaks, Kent TN13 1GP

licensing@sevenoaks.gov.uk

http://pa.sevenoaks.gov.uk/online-licensing on or before the: 22nd December 2016.

It is an offence knowingly or recklessly to make a false statement in connection with an application. The maximum fine for which a person is liable on summary of conviction for the offence is £5000.

**Licensing Act 2003**

Galliford Try Building Limited has applied to Ashford Borough Council for the Grant of a Premises Licence for the Supply of Alcohol from 00:00 to 24:00hrs every day for the premises of Spires, Little Hill, St. Michael's Road, Tenterden TN306DF. A register of licensing applications can be viewed at the Licensing Section, Civic Centre, Tannery Lane, Ashford, Kent, TN23 1PL 01233 330721 by appointment. Any person wishing to submit representations to this application must give notice in writing to the address shown above, giving in detail the grounds of objection by 21st December 2016. It is an offence knowingly or recklessly to make a false statement in connection with an application and the maximum fine for which a person is liable on summary conviction for the offence is £5000.

**PREMISES VARIATION APPLICATION FOR THE SALE OF ALCOHOL FOR CONSUMPTION OFF THE PREMISES**

**Notice of Application to vary a Premises Licence made under the Licensing Act 2003**

Notice is hereby given that, Chava Ltd of 12 High Street, Wrotham, Sevenoaks, Kent TN15 7AD has applied to Tonbridge & Malling Borough Council for the VARIATION of the hours to permit the sale of alcohol for consumption off the premises and shop opening hours from 06.00 hrs to 00.00 hrs on Mondays to Sundays inclusive. For the premises Hardens situated at 12 High Street, Wrotham, Sevenoaks, Kent TN15 7AD.

Any person wishing to submit representations about the proposals should make them in writing to: Licensing Services, Gibson Drive, Kings Hill, West Malling, Kent ME19 4LZ giving in detail the grounds of objection by

23/12/2016

It is an offence knowingly or recklessly to make a false statement in connection with an application. The maximum fine for which a person is liable on summary of conviction for the offence is £5000.

**LICENSING ACT 2003**
**PREMISES LICENCE**

**TAKE NOTICE THAT I Kanapathy Rainasingham Being the occupier(s)/ owner(s)/ applicant(s) of the undermentioned premises.**

Great Grapes, 89 Queensway, Petts Wood, Orpington, Kent BR5 1DQ

**Have applied to the Council of the London Borough of Bromley to allow the following licensable activities to take place:**

**RETAIL SALE OF ALCOHOL:**

For consumption off the premises Monday to Thursday from 11.00hrs to 03.00 hrs, Friday to Saturday 11.00hrs to 04.00hrs and Sundays from 11.00hrs to 00.00hrs

**under the above Act**

**(a) This is an application to vary the existing Premises Licence.**

Any person wishing to object to the application should do so by giving notice in writing stating the grounds of objection to the Environmental Health & Trading Standards, Licensing and Business Support, Civic Centre, Stockwell Close, Bromley, BR1 3UH, by 22/12/2016.

Persons objecting to the application should be prepared to attend in person at a public hearing before a Committee of the Council.

**Date: 25/11/2016**

**HIGHWAYS ACT 1980 – SECTION 116**
**STOPPING UP OF LAND AT LAND AT MARINA ESPLANADE, RAMSGATE**

I AM GIVING NOTICE THAT The Kent County Council as Highway Authority for the County of Kent propose to make an application to the Magistrates' sitting at Canterbury Magistrates' Court on 24 February 2017 at 10:00 for an Order under Section 116 of the Highways Act 1980 to extinguish highway rights on the grounds that they are unnecessary on land at Marina Esplanade, Ramsgate as on the plan on deposit.

A copy of the draft order and the plan referred to are on deposit, and can be seen during normal office hours, at the main reception of The Kent County Council at Sessions House, County Hall, Maidstone, Kent ME14 1XQ.

Any person to whom this Notice has been given or who uses the highway specified or who would be aggrieved by the making of the Order may appear before the Magistrates' Court to raise an objection or make a representation on the application. Any person intending to appear before the Magistrates' Court at the hearing of the application is requested to inform Frances Pierre by post to Legal Services, The Kent County Council, Sessions House, County Hall, Maidstone, Kent ME14 1XQ, by email frances.pierre@kent.gov.uk, or by telephone 03000 420020 before 14 February 2017 quoting reference number LS/21/112302/760.

If you require further information or would like to discuss this matter, please contact Frances Pierre using the contact details shown above.

ROGER WILKIN
DIRECTOR OF HIGHWAYS, TRANSPORTATION AND WASTE

**LICENSING ACT 2003**

Galliford Try Building Limited, of Strawberry Hill, Bevis Close, Stone, Dartford DA2 6HB has applied to Dartford Borough Council, Home Gardens, Dartford, Kent DA1 1DR for the Grant of a Premises Licence under the Licensing Act 2003. A copy of the application may be inspected during normal office hours at the Licensing Section, Dartford Borough Council offices, address above. The licensable activities will be Supply of Alcohol from 00:00 to 24:00 hrs every day. Any representations in respect of the application should be made in writing to the Licensing Department, Dartford Borough Council, Home Gardens, Dartford, Kent DA1 1DR by 21st December 2016. It is an offence knowingly or recklessly to make a false statement in connection with an application and the maximum fine for which a person is liable on summary conviction for the offence is £5000.

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The successful candidate will be responsible to the Headteacher for developing and leading the business and financial strategies of the school, whilst leading an efficient and effective range of professional support services to underpin the key function of the school.

As a member of the Senior Leadership Team you will contribute significantly to the continuous improvement of the school's strategy and key processes. The successful candidate will lead all support services and have overall management responsibility for: Administration, Finance, Human Resources, Premises and Facilities, Housekeeping Services and ICT infrastructure.

We are seeking a creative, committed and enthusiastic School Business Manager. You will be provided with an extended and ongoing package of induction and training, and will commit to achieving, within 3 years, or already hold, the Certificate of School Business Management (NCSL).

The learning and professional development of our people is a key priority at Bradstow and is essential in our specialised field. This is at the core of the success of the School. You will also be encouraged and supported to extend your skills and knowledge by undertaking further studies, including the Diploma of School Business Management, for which a review of salary would be considered.

If you would like to join our team and help us to continue to transform the lives of these children and their families, please contact us. Working at Bradstow is challenging and you will need to be committed to the needs of the young people and the school. In return we offer you a highly rewarding and satisfying career which will both develop your skills and prepare you for senior and/or specialist leadership posts as your career develops - with quite a bit of fun thrown in as well!

For an application form and information pack please email **personnel@bradstow.wandsworth.sch.uk**

Bradstow is committed to safeguarding and protecting the welfare of children and young people. The post is subject to an enhanced DBS check.

**Please note that CVs will not be considered.**

**Applications should be received by midnight Friday 9th December 2016**
**Interviews will be held on 12th January 2017**

We welcome visits to the school prior to your application, and a relocation package may be available to the right candidate.

To advertise in this section
01233 653465

# Edwards departs county on a high

## The former England captain announces she is leaving Kent

Cricket

**By Tom Pyman**

tom.pyman@archant.co.uk

CHARLOTTE Edwards has announced she is to leave Kent after more than a decade-and-a-half at the club.

The former England captain, who turns 37 later this month, lifted the domestic double with Kent in 2016 to bring her tally of trophies to ten with the county.

In 136 matches for Kent, Edwards scored 6,164 runs at an average of 61.64 in 100 completed innings, 29 not outs, and scored 40 half-centuries and 14 centuries.

Her top score was 151 not out against Middlesex in 2002, while with the ball, she took 124 wickets at an average of 17.51 and claimed 81 catches in the field.

"It's been a really tough decision to leave Kent but ultimately I feel it's the right decision for me and more importantly the current team," she said.

"Having won the double in 2016 I feel this is a fitting end to my time as a Kent cricketer.

"I have many memories and highlights from my Kent career, winning our first County Championship in 2006 at Uppingham School and the recent 2016 double are obvious highlights.

"Finally I'd like to thank all coaches, managers and players I have played with throughout the years.

"Kent will always have a special place in my heart and I wish the team all the very best for the future."

Kent Cricket CEO Jamie Clifford added: "It is a very sad day to see one of the stars of Kent cricket move on.

**ICON:** Charlotte Edwards is finally leaving Kent after almost two decades

"Charlotte has, through huge amounts of selfless commitment to the club, become the cornerstone of the game for women and girls in the county.

"Her playing record is of course extraordinary, but it will be her captaincy – leading Kent to so much success – that will never be forgotten.

"Perhaps even more significantly she is a champion for not just women's cricket in this country, but women's sport in general.

"She has done much for the profile and development of the game and her involvement has changed the direction of women's cricket positively for evermore."

# Chairman Webb quits after 'nightmare' spell

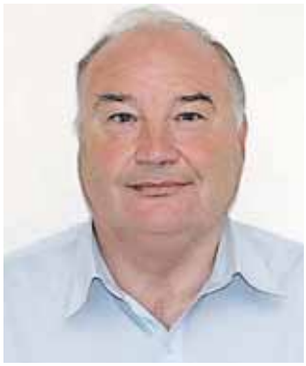
Football

JOHN Webb has stepped down as Margate chairman, insisting the club have been "let down very badly" in recent years.

The cash-strapped Blues have frequently been on the brink of financial disaster and boss Nikki Bull told us earlier this season the ramifications of the club's early exit in the FA Cup would be felt for weeks to come.

Since then, there has been something of an exodus from Hartsdown Park and Webb has now become the latest to leave.

In a statement announcing his departure, he said: "The reasons are varied which includes my health, family, business and my desire to ensure MFC is moved forward.



**EXIT:** John Webb

"My period as chairman should have been a pleasant one, but turned into a nightmare. I, and Margate Football Club have been let down very badly with false hope and promises, from people who knew better.

"I have come across lies and deceit from the top down.

"People who only had their personal interest at heart and not the benefit of the club, the systematic dismantling of both the financial structure and the commercial structure has lead to situations where the club has been seriously undermined.

"We have now overcome these obstacles and reinstated some semblance of control.

"It has taken this long to rectify the wrong doings and get people into positions who do not have hidden agendas."

## Sport Shorts

» Email **sports@kosmedia.co.uk** or call **Tom Pyman** on **01233653477**

# Sports minister opens £1m trampoline park

TRAMPOLINING in Kent appears to be continuing its upward trajectory after a £1m park was opened in Chatham by sports minister and town MP, Tracey Crouch.

Paralympic skiing gold medalist Charlotte Evans and representatives from the Kent Sports Trust Foundation were also on hand to launch Flip Out, an 18,500 sq ft arena with 70 inter-linked trampolines, which aims to help get trampolining onto the Medway school curriculum.

Some 40 new jobs have been created at the Dockside venue which also features a 7m tumble track, free running area, a separate area for the under-5s to bounce in, plus wall runners and foam pits.

Mrs Crouch said: "Trampolining is a really popular activity right across the country and it's a great way to exercise, socialise and have fun.

"Arenas like this provide a safe and enjoyable environment for people of all ages and with different levels of experience."

**BOUNCE:** MP Tracey Crouch

**GONG:** Maddie Hinch is among the county stars who won gold in Rio

# More awards for our Olympic hockey stars

KENT'S Olympic hockey stars scooped yet more gongs this week at the inaugural Team GB Awards.

The gold-medal winning women's hockey team, which features county representatives Susannah Townsend, Nicola White, Shona McCallin, Maddie Hinch and Sam Quek, claimed both the BBC Moment of the Games and the publicly-voted Great Britain's Choice Award, while team boss Danny Kerry won Coach of the Year.

The awards were part of the Team GB Ball as the Rio Olympians came together once again to celebrate the success of the Games this summer and help support Team GB on the road to PyeongChang and Tokyo.

Kerry said: "I'm very proud of the girls – it really is something exceptional."

# Gills rest as team eyes consistency

GILLINGHAM'S FA Cup exit at the hands of minnows Brackley means they get a rare weekend off, with manager Justin Edinburgh praying his side can return to some sort of consistency.

And the club will continue to put the players through their paces until Monday, December 12, when they finally return to action with an evening away trip to high-flying Bolton.

Since the first round exit, the Gills bounced back with a win on the road to Walsall, a loss at Oxford and then last weekend's thumping 3-0 home victory against promotion-chasing Rochdale.

In a tight League One, it saw them going into the weekend in 15th place – just three points separating them from the play-off places.

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